JOHN MEHEGAN FAMOUS JAZZ STYLE PIANO FOLIO

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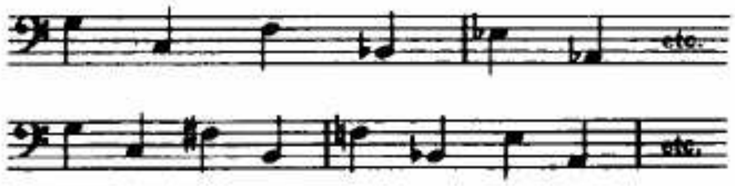
How To Play Jazz Piano

Jazz Harmony

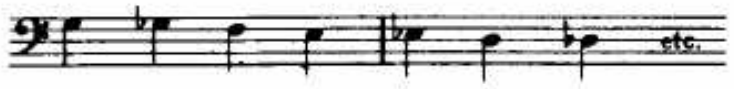
In converting a tune from sheet music to jazz, the essential problem is a harmonic one. The melody, of course, remains intact, the final problem being to make the tune swing.

To a jazz musician, there are two swinging harmonic sounds that he must constantly strive for. Both of these sounds lie in the bass line or roots of the chords; they are

CIRCLE OF FIFTHS



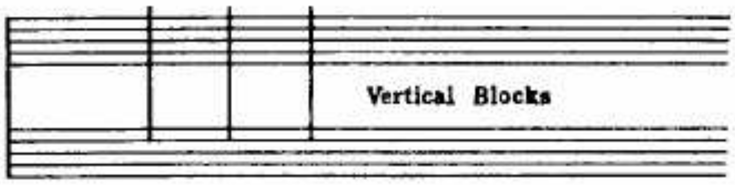
CHROMATIC SECONDS

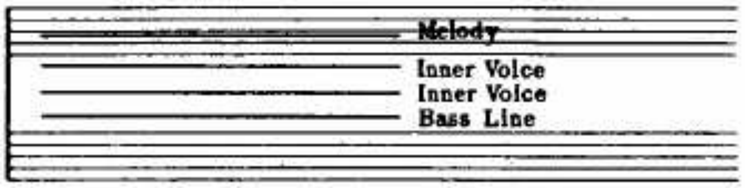


As we will see, these two devices are interchangeable and may function quite freely as long as the intention of the composer is in general respected.

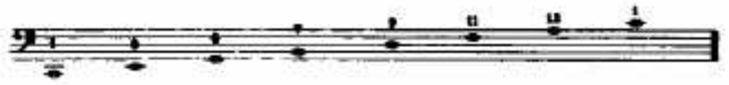
This brings up a point of conflict between the jazz man and the composer. The jazz musician approaches a tune as a set of changes that swing; the composer is concerned with a melody and its wedding to a lyric. Somewhere underneath, the latter is, of course, conscious of a harmonic structure, but it never receives the attention in his mind that it will receive from the jazz musician.

The composer generally approaches harmony as vertical chunks of sound, each chunk fulfilling its more immediate melodic requirements; the jazz man (on the other hand) thinks of harmony as a series of horizontal voices moving contrapuntally against each other.



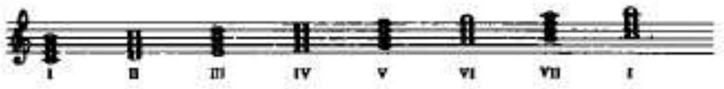


Before we can proceed with our analysis, we must first establish the harmonic basis with which a jazz musician functions. Jazz harmony is tonal harmony and operates on the simple basis of piling 3rds on top of each other in a tone row.

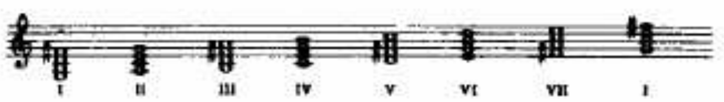


(FOOTNOTE: recent developments in jazz have shown the partial abandonment of 3rds and, instead, the use of 4ths and 2nds, but for practical discussion here, we will be concerned with the traditional 3rds.)

1-3-5-7 constitutes the basic structure of a chord, 9-11-13 are ornamental tones. If we build 1-3-5-7 on each tone of the scale of C following the signature of C, the following scale tone 7th chords are derived:



On the scale of G, following the signature of G, the chords would appear as follows, and so through the 12 keys:



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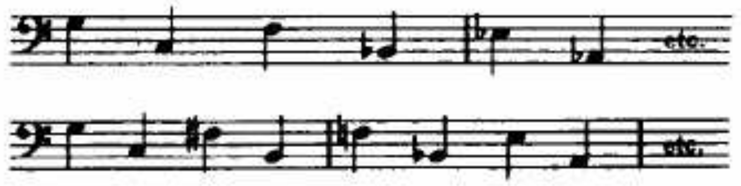
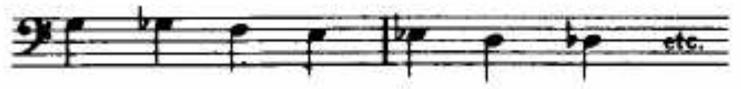


CHROMATIC SECONDS



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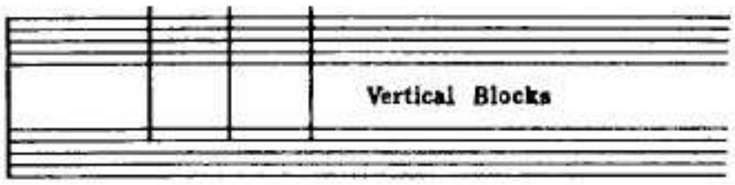

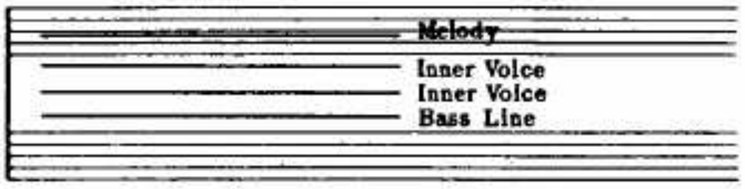

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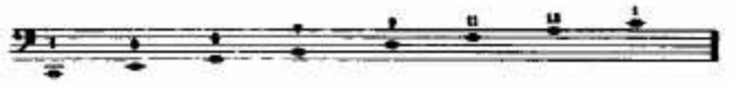

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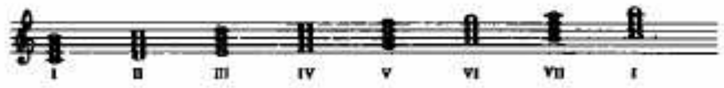

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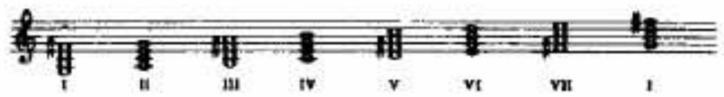


The next step is to evolve a simple shorthand in order to easily determine these various clusters of tones. This is done by assigning fixed values to the 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths of each chord.

If a 3rd or 7th falls in the scale of the bottom note, they are **Major** . . . lowered, **minor** . . . lowered twice, **diminished.** If a 5th falls in the scale of the bottom note it is **perfect** . . . lowered, **diminished** . . . raised, **augmented.** On the basis of these rules, the scale tone 7th chords, in every key have the same values. These are the symbols:

M — Major	**P — perfect**	**x — dominant**
m — minor	**o — diminished**	**o — half-diminished**

These interval combinations represent the following chords:

Numeral	3rd	5th	7th	Quality	Symbol
I	M	P	M	Major	M
II	m	P	m	minor	m
III	m	P	m	minor	m
IV	M	P	M	Major	M
V	M	P	m	dominant	x
VI	m	P	m	minor	m
VII	m	o	m	half-diminished	o
—	m	o	o	diminished	o

We now have 5 quality possibilities on each tone; there are 12 tones in the octave, hence we have 60 chords. The 5 chords on **C** appear as follows:

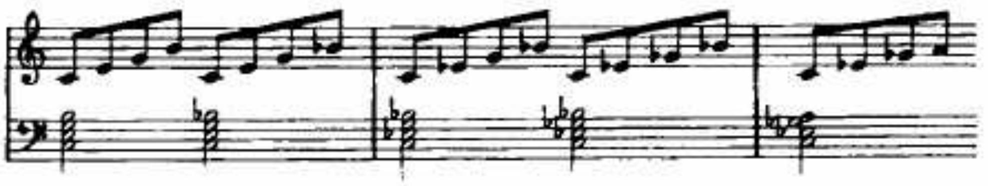
C Major — C E G B
C dominant — C E G Bb
C minor — C Eb G Bb
C half-diminished — C Eb Gb Bb
C diminished — C Eb Gb A

These chords may be altered at will, also chromatically raised or lowered. We are now in a position to establish a harmonic framework upon which to build our improvisation.

The jazz musician is willing to respect the basic functions in the chords of a tune; however, he reserves the privilege of adding whatever ornamental structures are necessary to give a tune color and substance. He also prefers chords that move in half-note values, 2 to the bar; or, in "up tempo" tunes, whole note chords or a mixture of both depending upon the fabric of the tune.

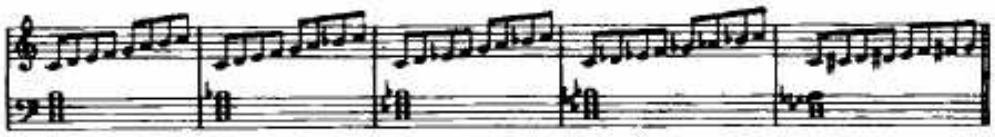
Once the chord chart is established and a tempo chosen, the next problem is to 'blow' a line on the tune, using the chords as a framework.

All improvisational lines are composed of 2 basic structures: adjacent tones — scales and alternate tones — arpeggios. The arpeggios are self-evident, since they essentially involve broken chords.



Scale patterns are more complex; the following table describes the 5 chord values and their accompanying scales:

- **Major 7** — normal Major scale, root to root.
- **dominant 7** — Major scale a perfect 4th above, root to root.
- **minor 7** — Major scale a Major 2nd below root to root.
- **half-diminished 7** — Major scale a minor 2nd above, root to root.
- **diminished 7** — chromatic scale, root to root.

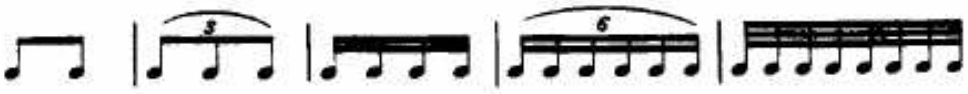


Each one of these scales uses 7 tones of the octave, in each case omitting 5. These are the passing tones which may also be used so long as the tones of each scale remain the principal tones.

So much for the tonal materials. The rhythmic structure of jazz can be most easily expressed by the following example:

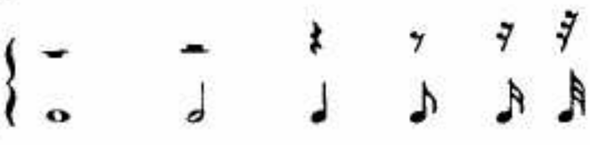
♩ — foot beat ♩ — left hand ♪ — right hand

A rhythmic counterpoint in jazz is best assured by employing the right hand, 1/8th notes or any of the quicker rhythmic combinations up to the 32nd note. The rhythmic spectrum usually employed includes the following:



The following set of rest values completes the rhythmic picture:

Rest Values
Note Values



These are the tonal and rhythmic elements which go to make an interesting improvisation.

The voicing of chords in vertical blocks is, of course, extremely complex, although the adherence to 2 basic rules will go far to insure interesting tonal combinations:

(1) Avoid doubling the bass note.
(2) All chord structures must contain a 3rd and a 7th, and usually employ the ornamental tone of the 9th.

History Of Jazz Piano

The history of jazz piano since 1940 has seen the gradual disappearance of the magnificent swing-bass system of Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, the resulting decline of solo piano and the emergence of the modern "horn" concept of the keyboard.

A brief outline of modern jazz piano since 1940 appears as follows:

Art Tatum-Teddy Wilson
Bud Powell

Dissidents	Rhythmic School	Harmonic School
Thelonius Monk	Horace Silver	George Shearing
Lennie Tristano	Hampton Hawes	Oscar Peterson
Erroll Garner		
Dave Brubeck		
Cy Walter		

You will find interspersed through this album examples of the basic mechanics employed in the right hand "blowing line", as well as the essential left hand devices employed by the Rhythmic and Harmonic schools. A study of the Dissidents is beyond the scope of this album.

THE RHYTHMIC SCHOOL

The basic architecture of the Rhythmic School is a root-third or root-seventh interval appearing generally in the lower bass register. The basic device of this system is illustrated in Fig. 1 which should be explored from each of the twelve major thirds-D♭-F, D-F♯, E♭-G, etc. (See Fig. 2)

Fig. 1

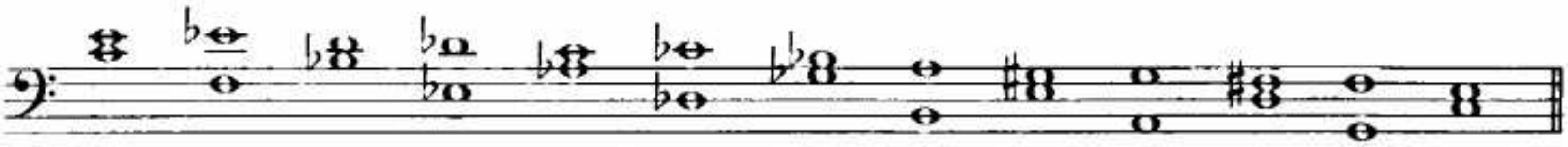
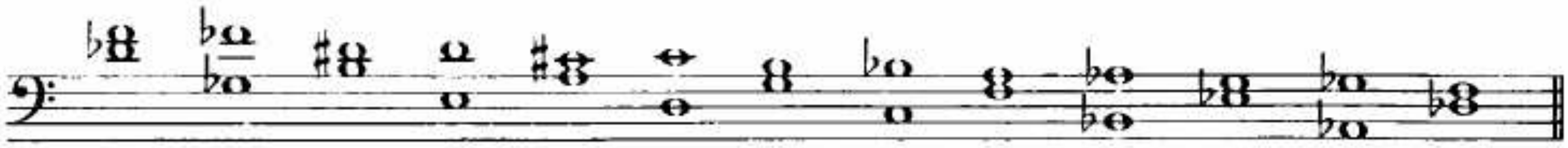
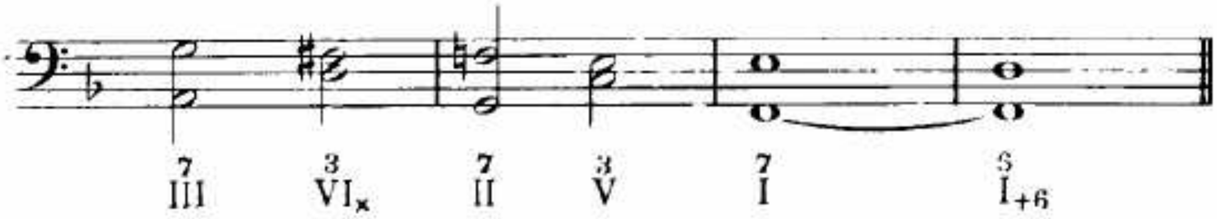


Fig. 2

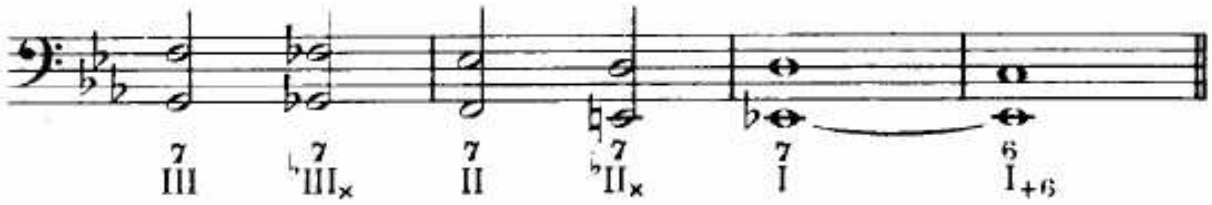


In general, jazz harmonic patterns fall into three groups:

1. Circle of fifths (Fig. 3)



2. Chromatic patterns (Fig. 4)



3. Diatonic patterns (Fig. 5)

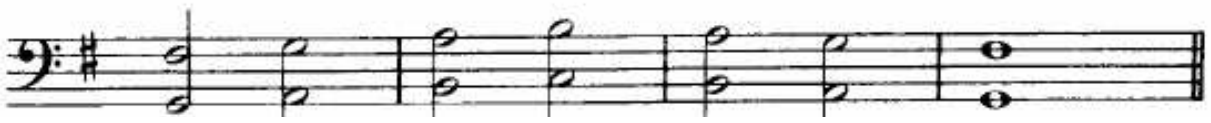


Fig. 3 reads: Key of F-III point of 7, $\mathrm{VI}_{\times}$ point of 3, II point of 7, V point of 3, I point of 7, I^{+6} point of 6. Point of 3 only occurs in a circle of fifths.

In all II-V-I patterns the following points prevail: $\overset{7}{\mathrm{II}}$-$\overset{3}{\mathrm{V}}$-$\overset{7}{\mathrm{I}}$

In all m-× patterns the following points prevail: $\overset{7}{\mathrm{m}}$-$\overset{3}{\times}$. Same ø-× patterns.

In all ×-× patterns the following points prevail: $\overset{7}{\times}$-$\overset{3}{\times}$-$\overset{7}{\times}$-etc.

Fig. 4 reads: Key of E♭ III point of 7, $^{\flat}\mathrm{III}_{\times}$ point of 7, II point of 7, $^{\flat}\mathrm{II}_{\times}$ point of 7, I point of 7, I^{+6} point of 6, Chromatic patterns employ point of 7 only.

Fig. 5 reads: Key of G-I point of 7, II point of 7, III point of 7, IV point of 7, III point of 7, II point of 7, I point of 7. Diatonic patterns employ point of 7 only.

The missing inner voices of these harmonic "shells" appear in the right hand blowing line. All inversion points derive from the outside voices of the inversion.

THE HARMONIC SCHOOL

In recent years there has been a major trend in jazz piano away from the 7-3 system toward a bigger keyboard sonority similar to that found in the late 19th century piano concerto. These sonorities are usually described as "voicings" employing the essential tones of a chord (3rd, 5th, 7th) as well as selected "ornamental" tonic:

ORNAMENTAL SERIES:

M-9, ♯11
× - 9, ♭9, ♯9,
11 (♯3), ♯11,
13, ♭13

m-9, 11
ø-9, 11
○-9, 11

The voicings represented in the following table are only basic structures. The accompanying arrangements employ these structures in addition to the following modifications:

1. Alteration
2. Suspension
3. Inversion
4. Omitted tonic
5. Pedal Point

Inversions do not affect the voicing, only the root. Voicings should be mastered in both hands and may be utilized for supporting a blowing line or accompanying in a rhythm section.

Each of the sixty chords employs two voicings built either on the third or seventh of the prevailing quality.

In the accompanying studies the 7-3 architecture has been employed in the bright tunes: the voicings in the ballads. Either style may be used in either tempo although the procedure followed here seems more appropriate for solo piano.

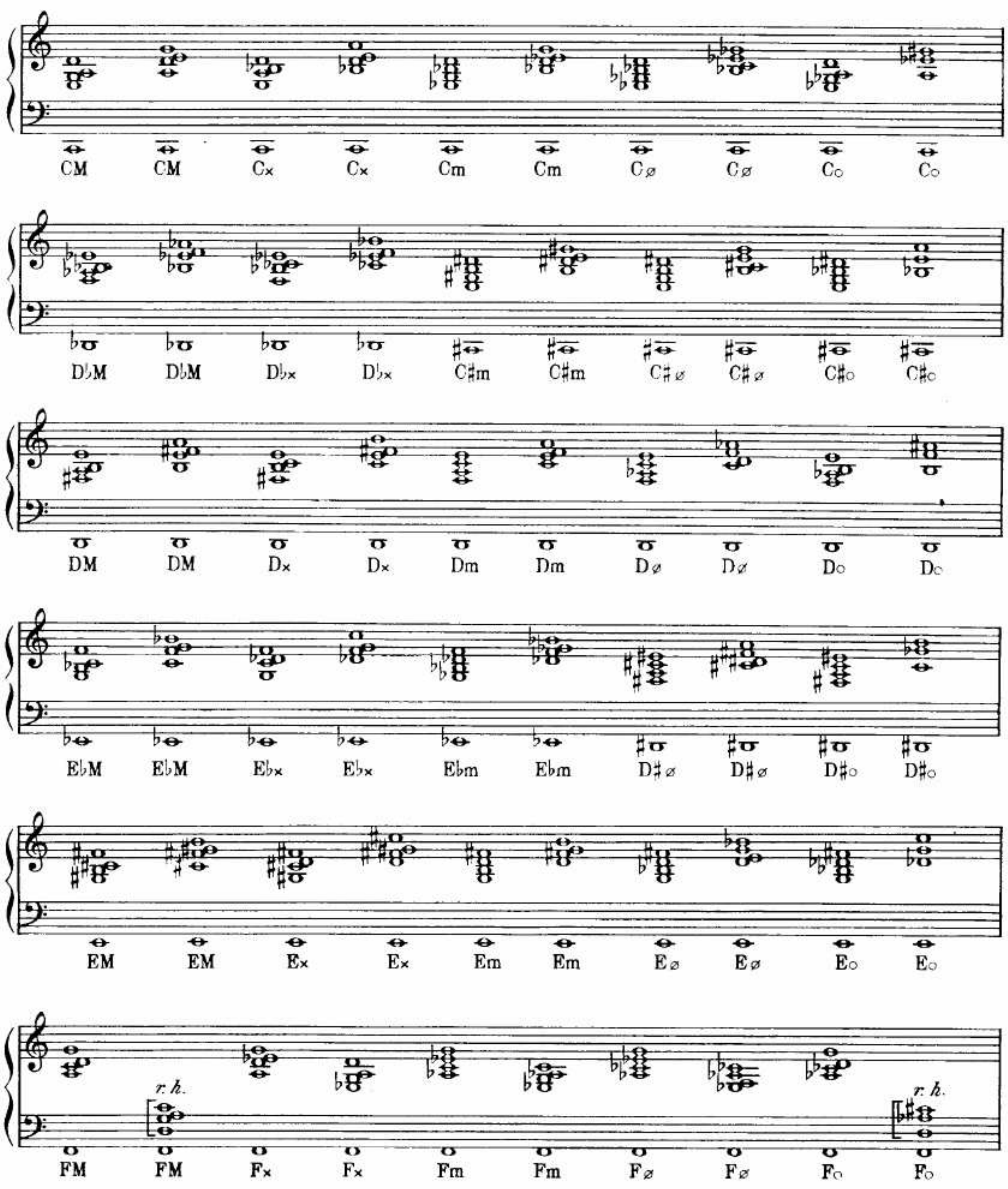
John Mehegan

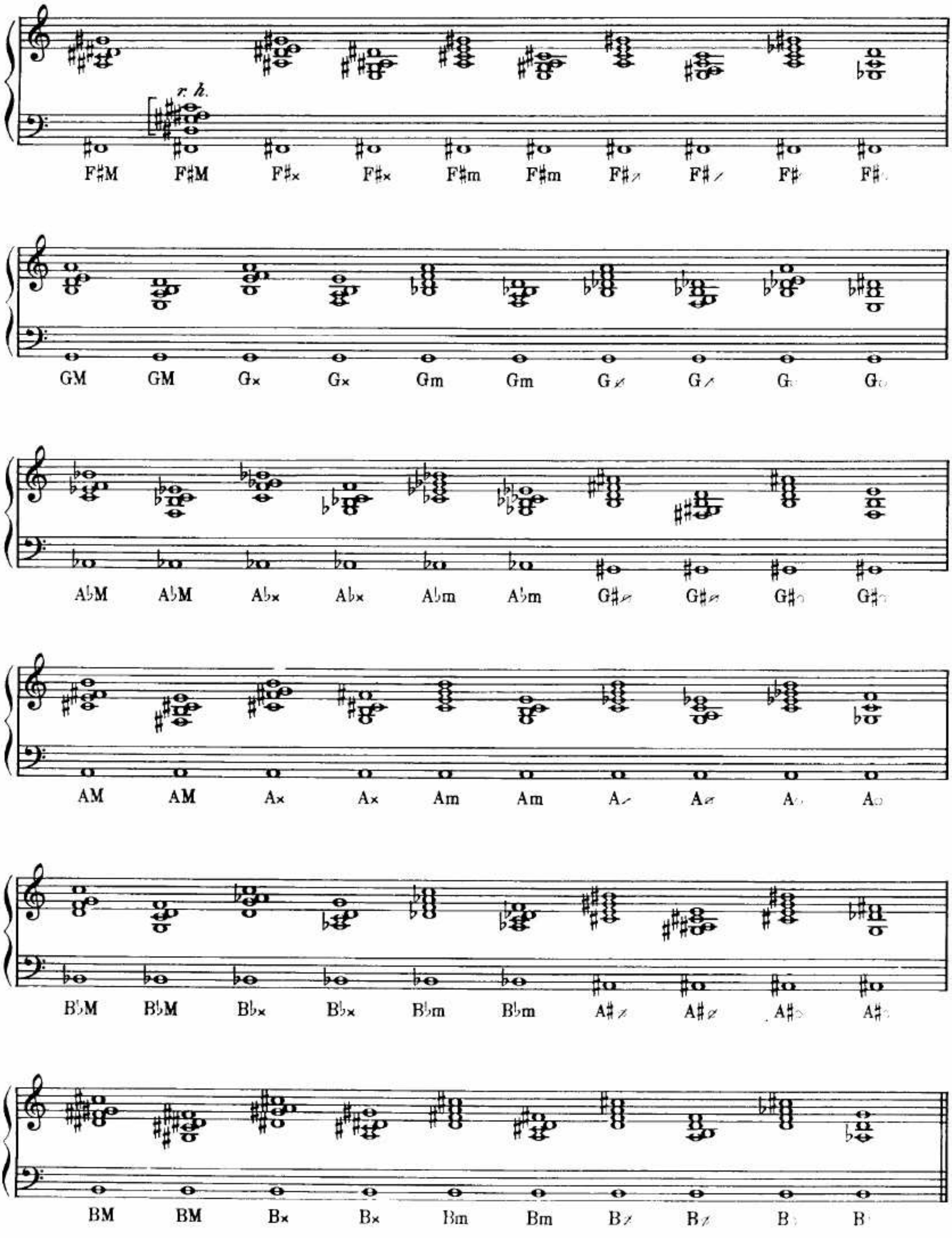
Note: THE VOICING CHART ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES APPLIES ONLY TO THE FOLLOWING:

The Lonesome Road   Tangerine   Love Letters   Stella By Starlight   The Nearness Of You

Jazz Voicing Chart

(Each Chord Is Independent Of The Others)


CM CM C× C× Cm Cm Cø Cø C○ C○
D♭M D♭M D♭× D♭× C♯m C♯m C♯ø C♯ø C♯○ C♯○
DM DM D× D× Dm Dm Dø Dø D○ D○
E♭M E♭M E♭× E♭× E♭m E♭m D♯ø D♯ø D♯○ D♯○
EM EM E× E× Em Em Eø Eø E○ E○
r. h.
r. h.
FM FM F× F× Fm Fm Fø Fø F○ F○

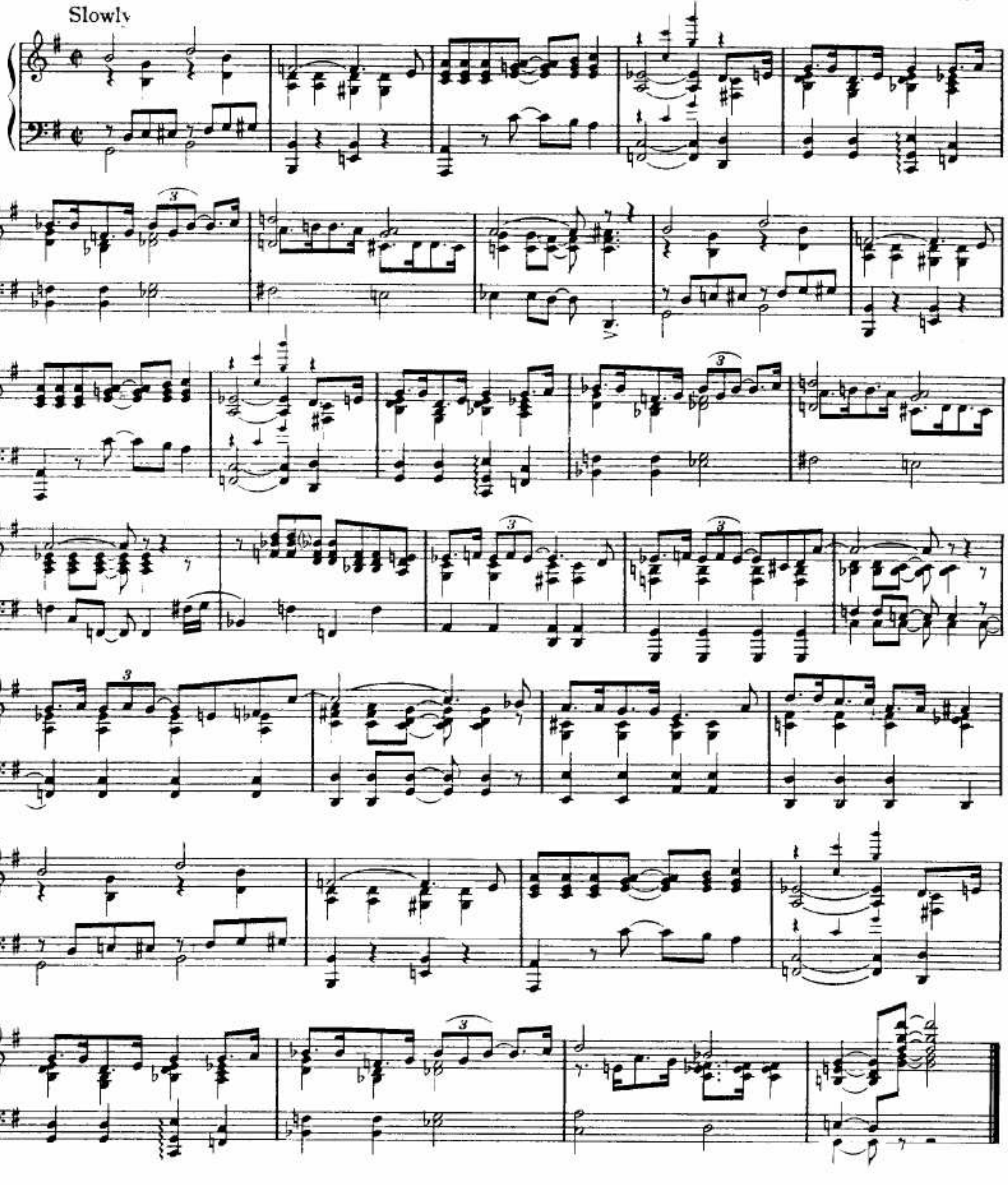

r. h.
F♯M
F♯M
F♯×
F♯×
F♯m
F♯m
F♯ø
F♯ø
F♯°
F♯°
GM
GM
G×
G×
Gm
Gm
Gø
Gø
G°
G°
A♭M
A♭M
A♭×
A♭×
A♭m
A♭m
G♯ø
G♯ø
G♯°
G♯°
AM
AM
A×
A×
Am
Am
Aø
Aø
A°
A°
B♭M
B♭M
B♭×
B♭×
B♭m
B♭m
A♯ø
A♯ø
A♯°
A♯°
BM
BM
B×
B×
Bm
Bm
Bø
Bø
B°
B°

Reduction and Analysis of "My

MY OLD FLAME

From the Paramount Picture "BELLE OF THE NINETIES"

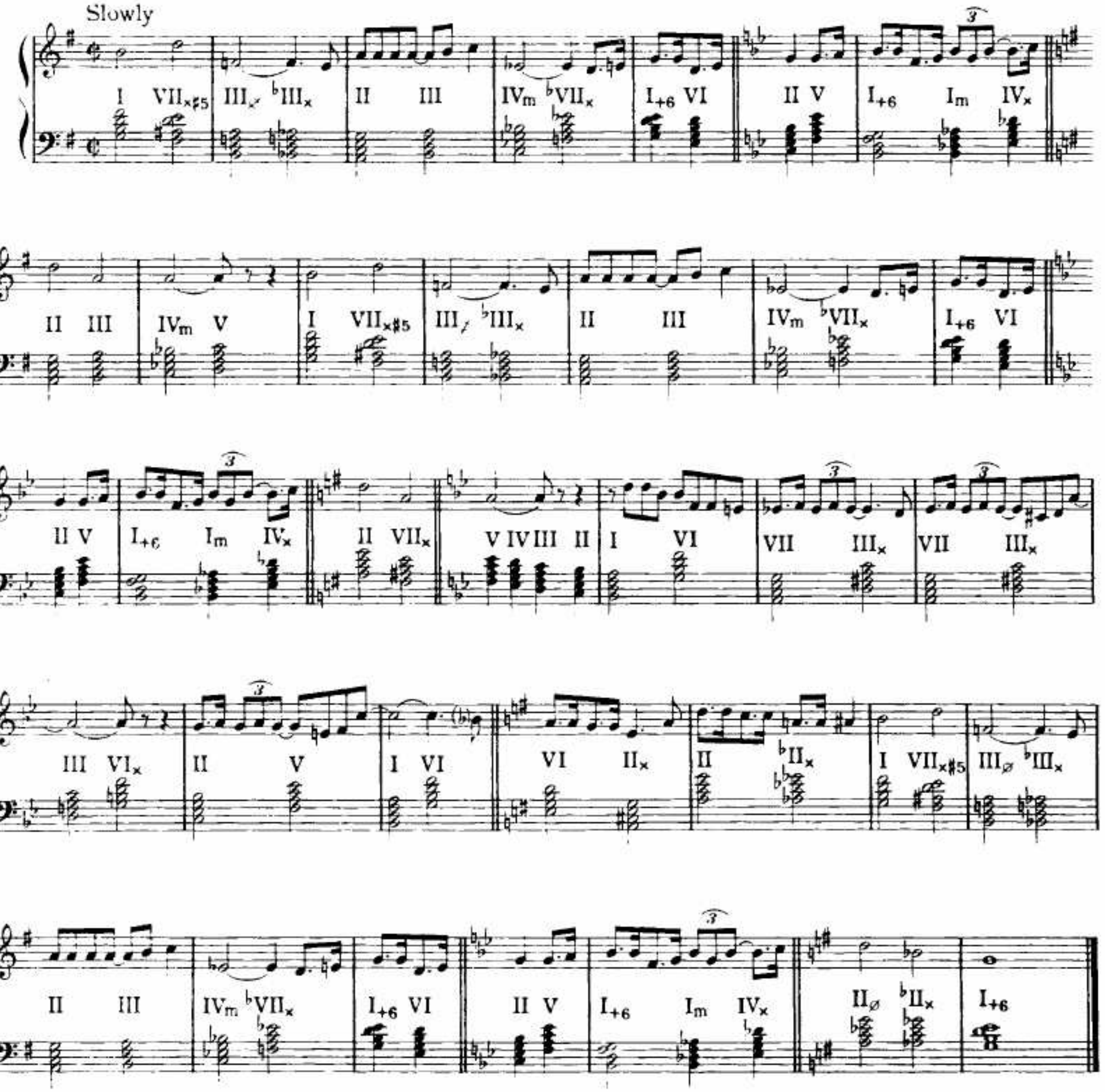
By ARTHUR JOHNSTON
and SAM COSLOW



Old Flame"

HARMONIC REDUCTION CHART FOR "MY OLD FLAME"

By ARTHUR JOHNSTON
and SAM COSLOW


Slowly
I VII×♯5 III× ♭III× II III IVm ♭VII× I+6 VI II V I+6 Im IV×
II III IVm V I VII×♯5 III× ♭III× II III IVm ♭VII× I+6 VI
II V I+6 Im IV× II VII× V IV III II I VI VII III× VII III×
III VI× II V I VI VI II× II ♭II× I VII×♯5 IIIø ♭III×
II III IVm ♭VII× I+6 VI II V I+6 Im IV× IIø ♭II× I+6
3

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From the Paramount Picture "BELLE OF THE NINETIES"

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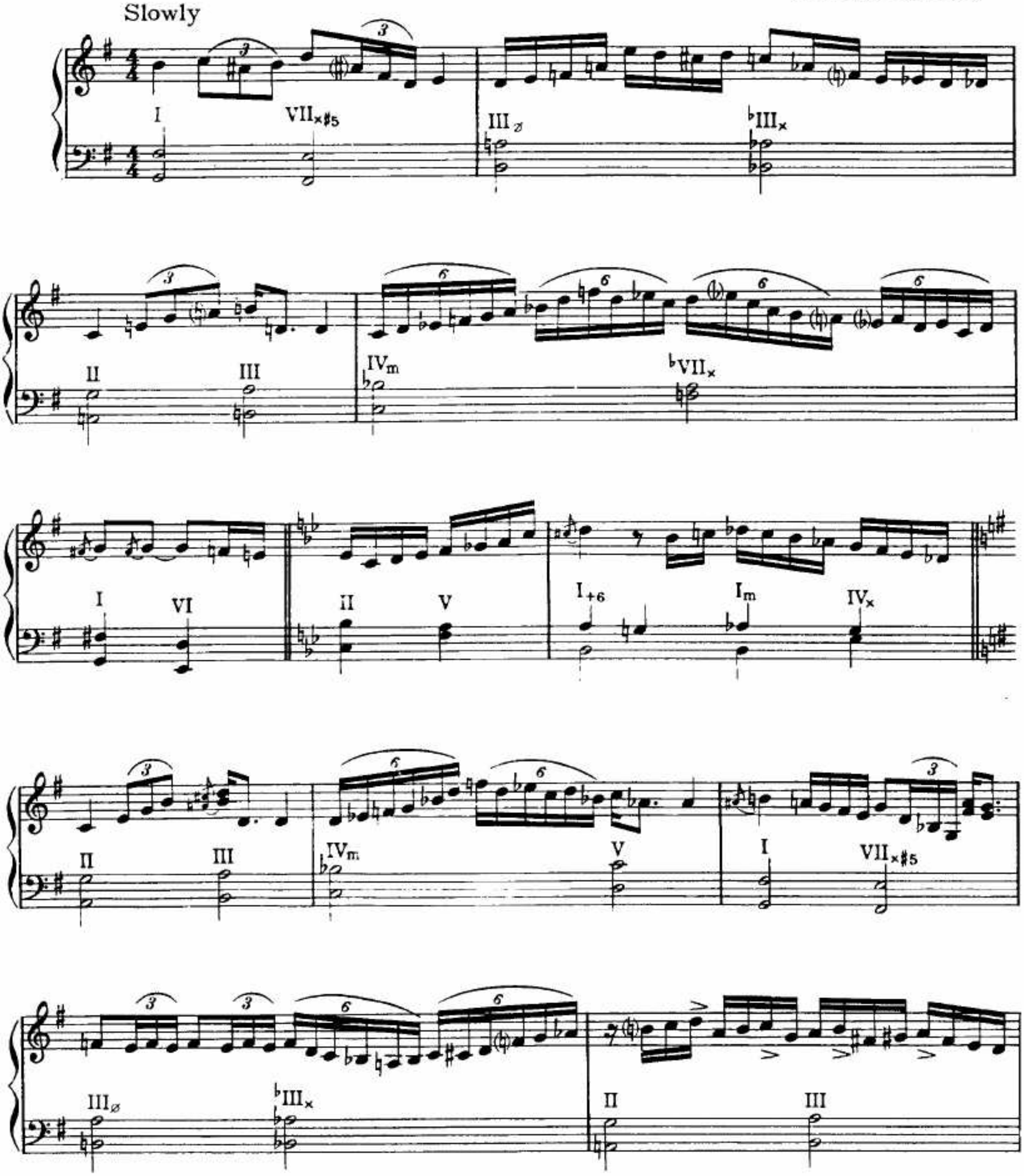
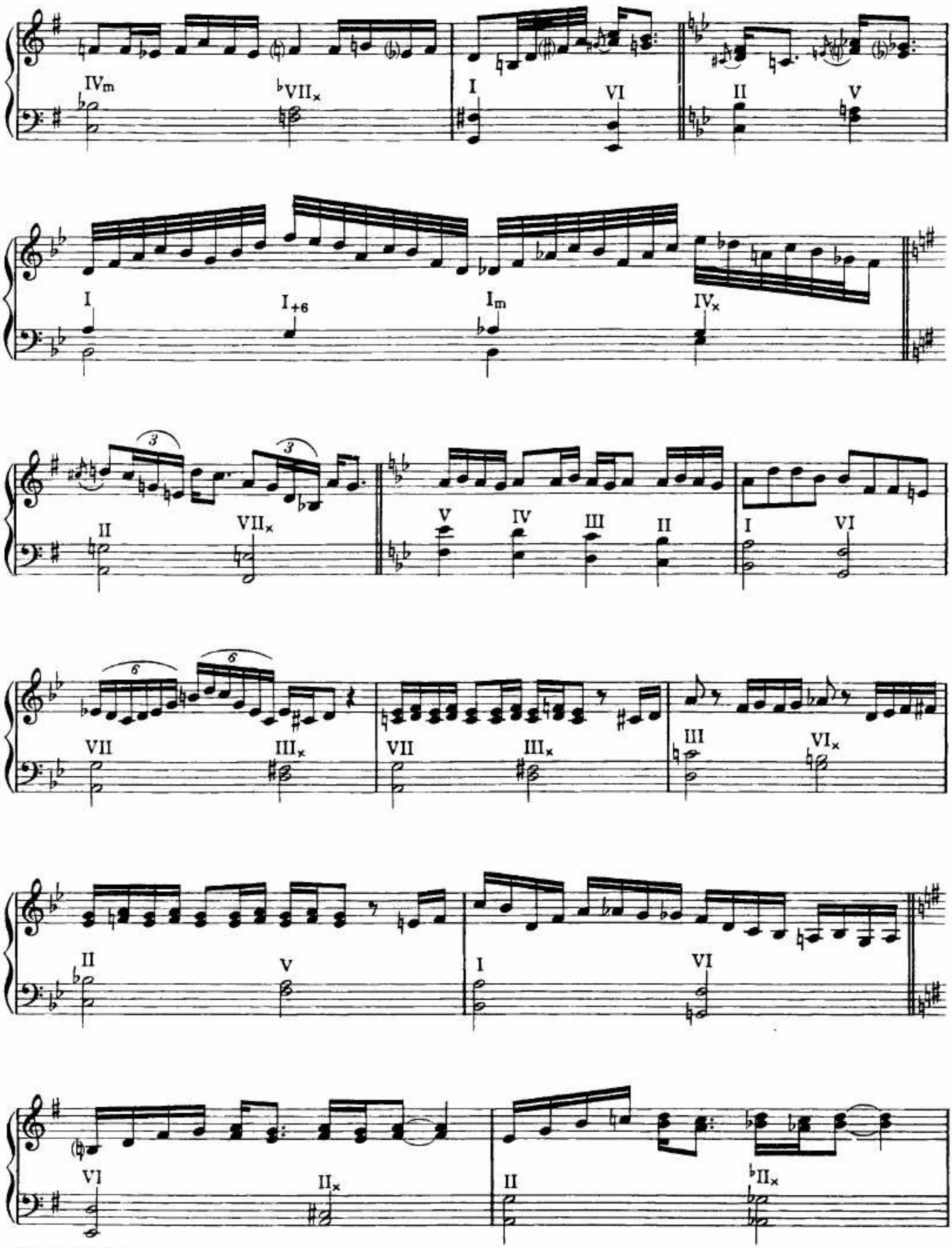
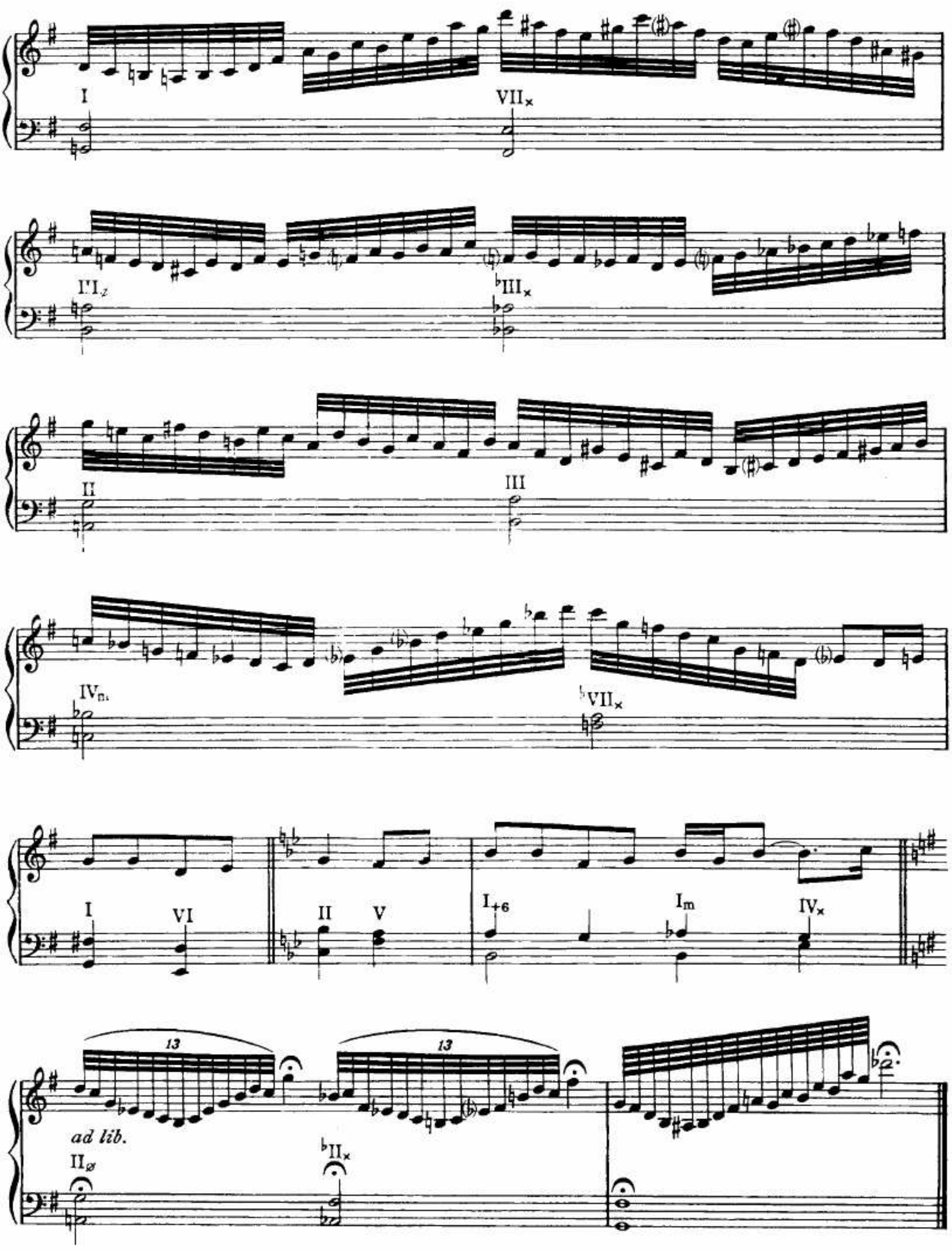
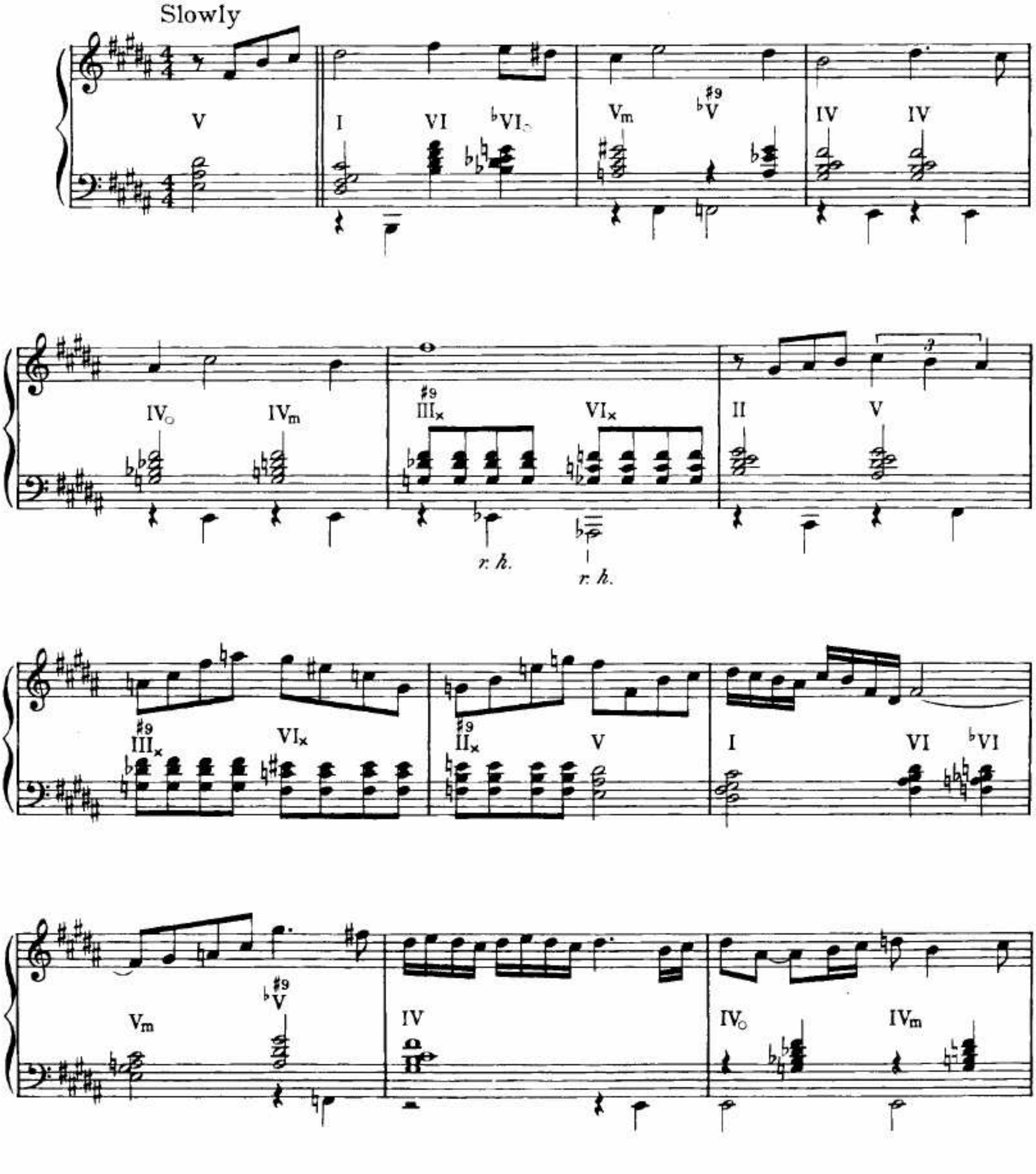


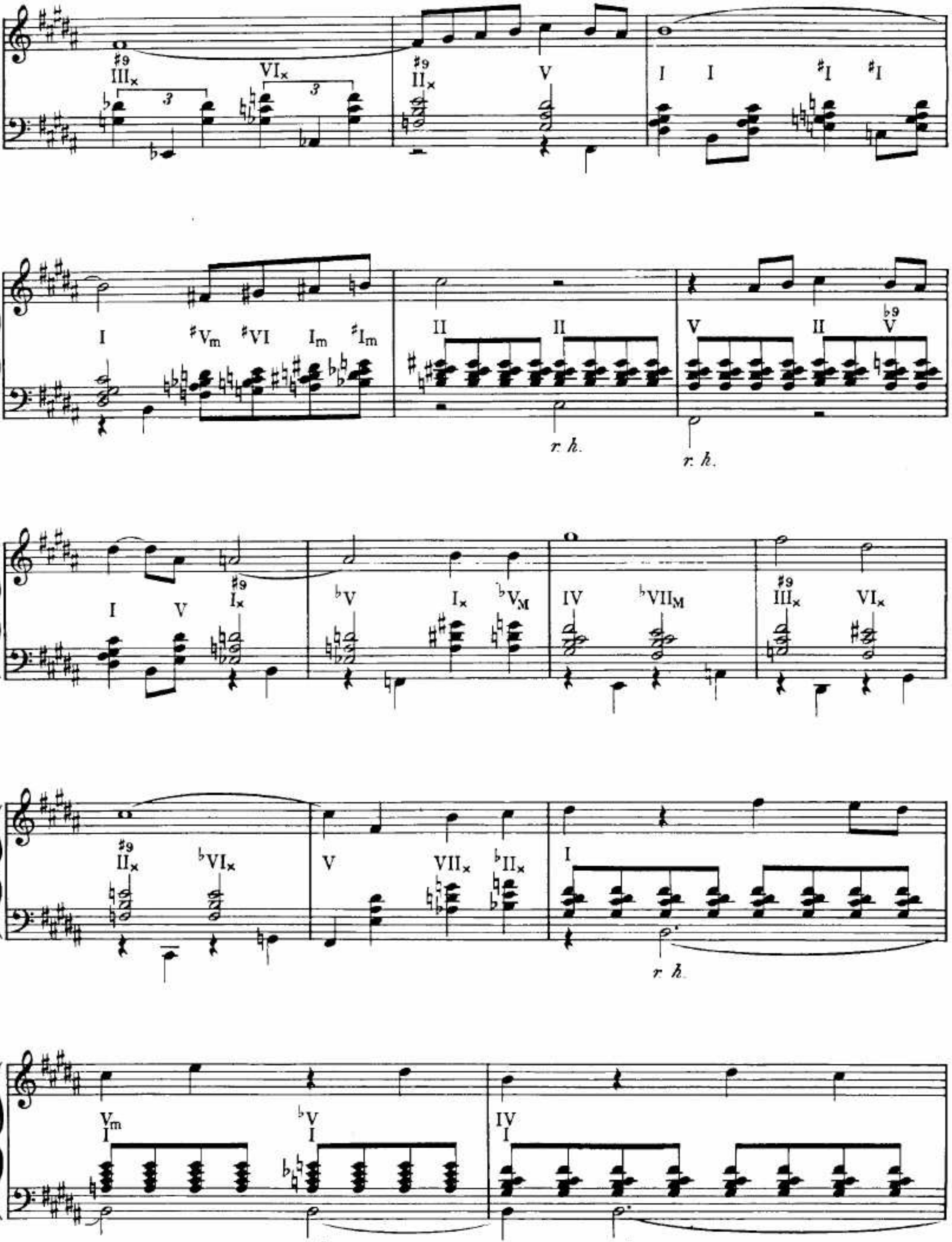

IVm
♭VII×
I
VI
II
V
I
I+6
Im
IV×
3
3
II
VII×
V
IV
III
II
I
VI
6
6
VII
III×
VII
III×
III
VI×
II
V
I
VI
VI
II×
II
♭II×

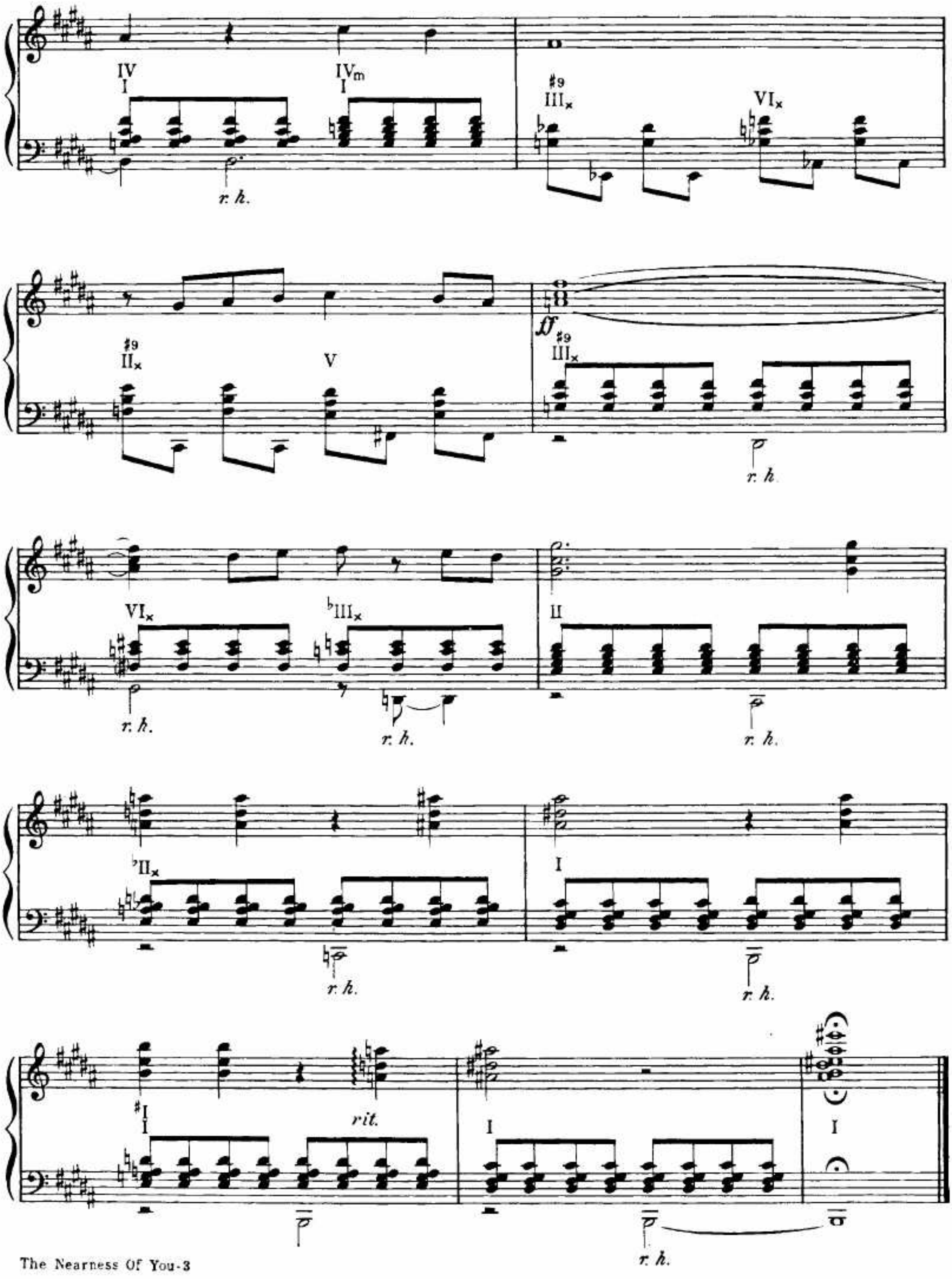

I
VII×
VI₁₃
♭III×
II
III
IVm
♭VII×
I
VI
II
V
I+6
Im
IV×
13
13
ad lib.
II∅
♭II×

THE NEARNESS OF YOU

By NED WASHINGTON
and HOAGY CARMICHAEL



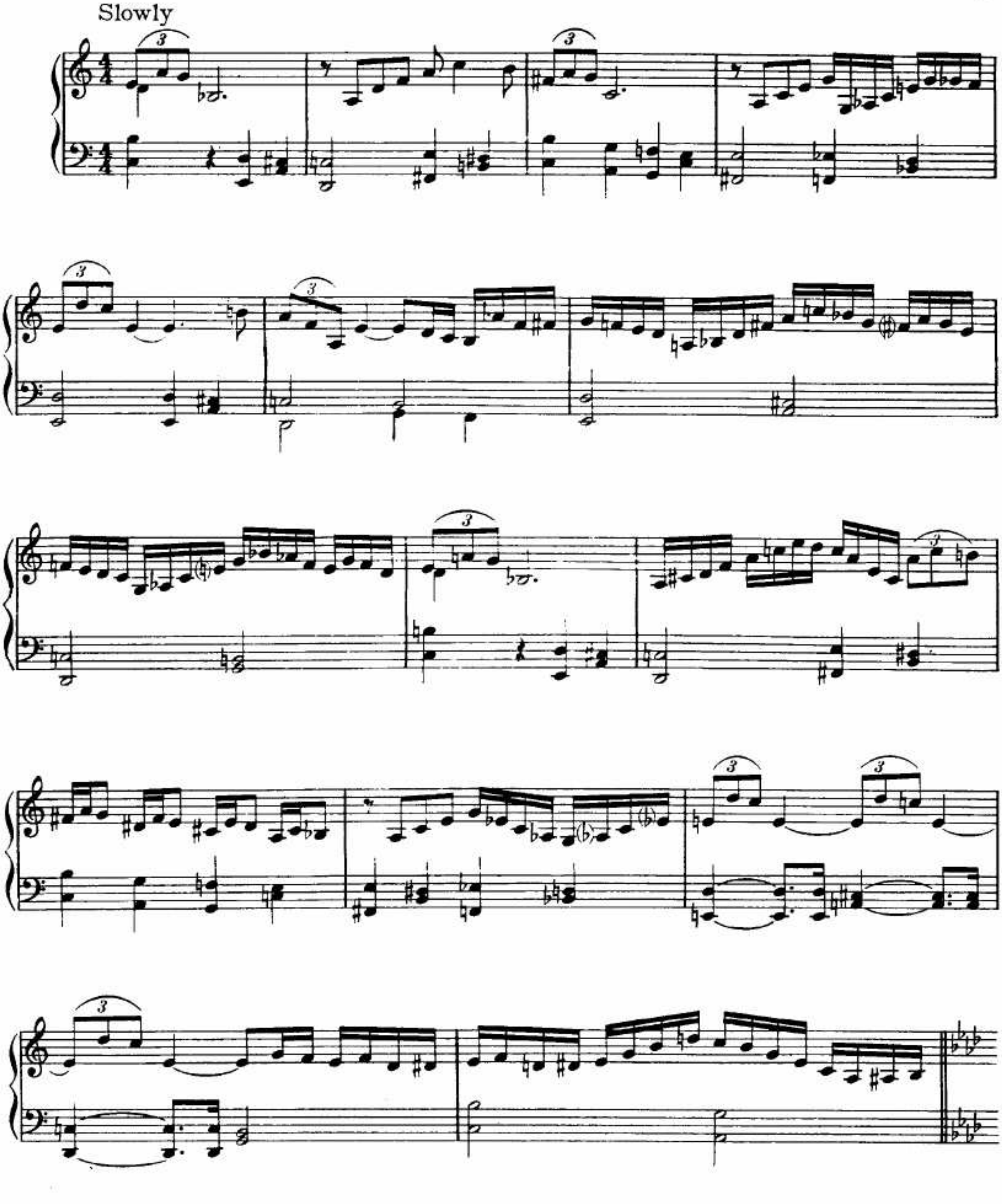

♯9 III×
VI×
3
3
♯9 II×
V
I
I
♯I
♯I
I
♯Vm
♯VI
Im
♯Im
II
II
V
II
♭9 V
r. h.
r. h.
I
V
♯9 I×
♭V
I×
♭VM
IV
♭VIIM
♯9 III×
VI×
♯9 II×
♭VI×
V
VII×
♭II×
I
r. h.
Vm I
♭V I
IV I
r. h.
r. h.

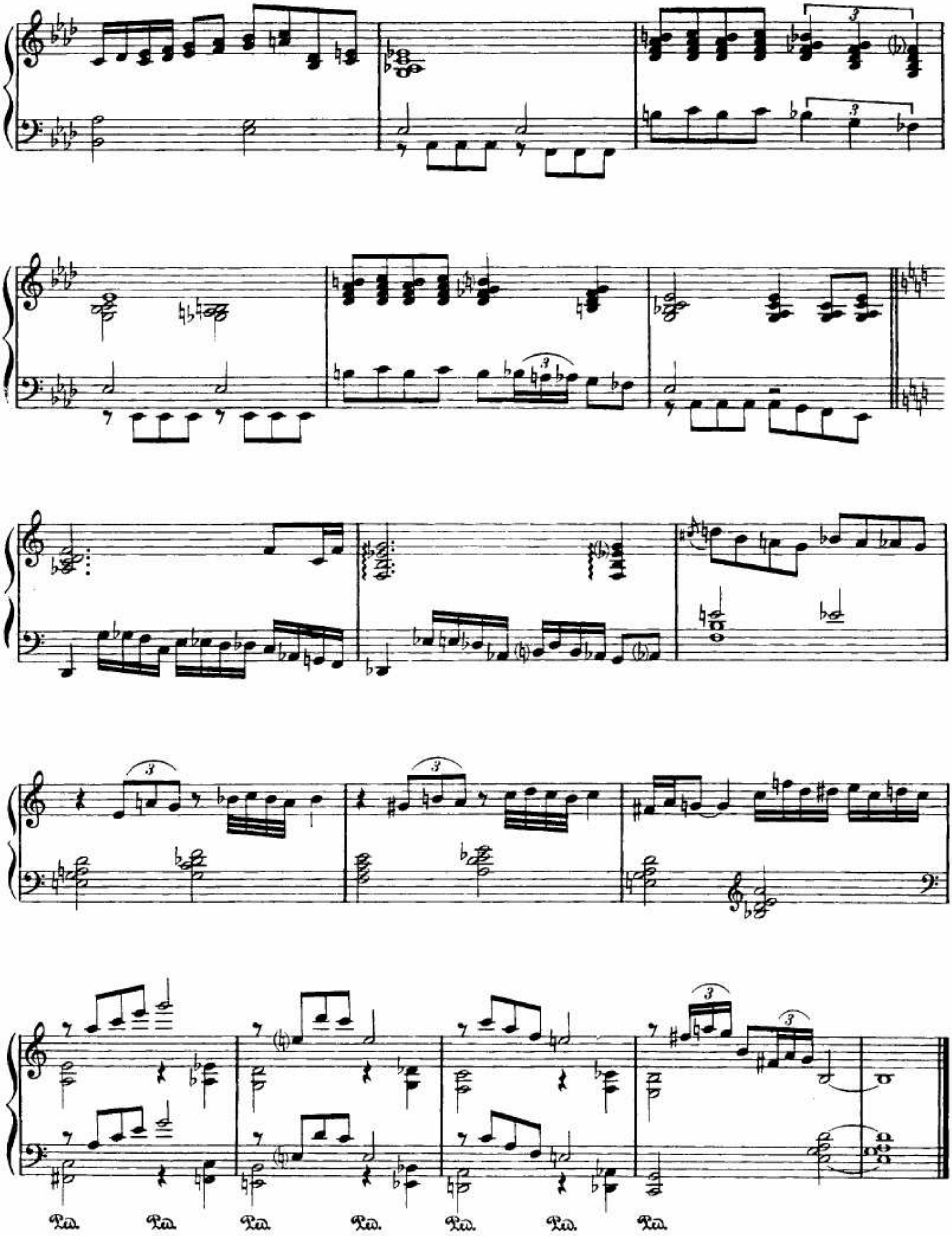

IV
I
IVm
I
r. h.
♯9
III×
VI×
♯9
II×
V
ff
♯9
III×
r. h.
VI×
r. h.
♭III×
r. h.
II
r. h.
♭II×
r. h.
I
r. h.
♯I
I
rit.
I
r. h.
I

EASY LIVING

From the Paramount Picture "EASY LIVING"

By LEO ROBIN and
RALPH RAINGER

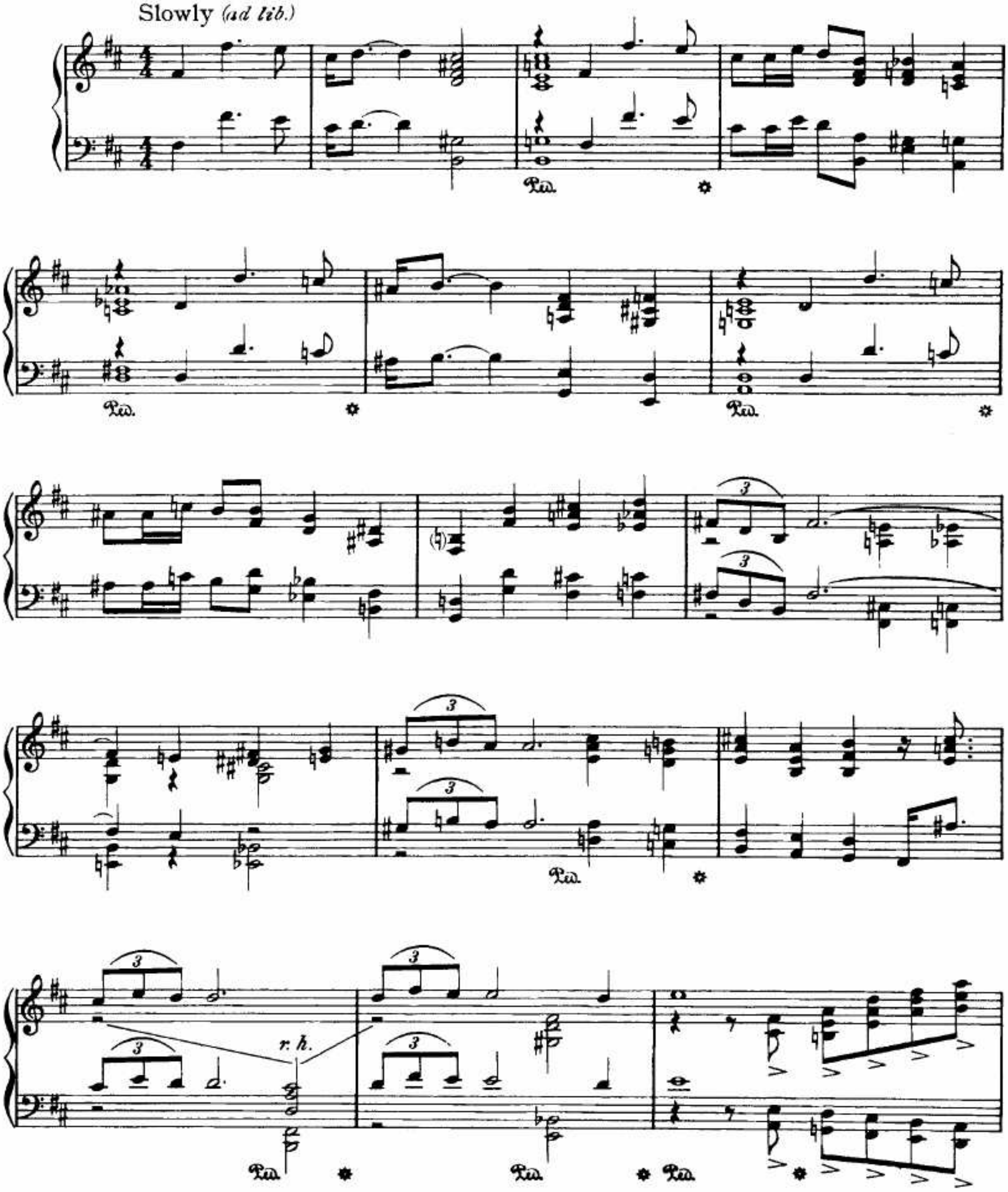


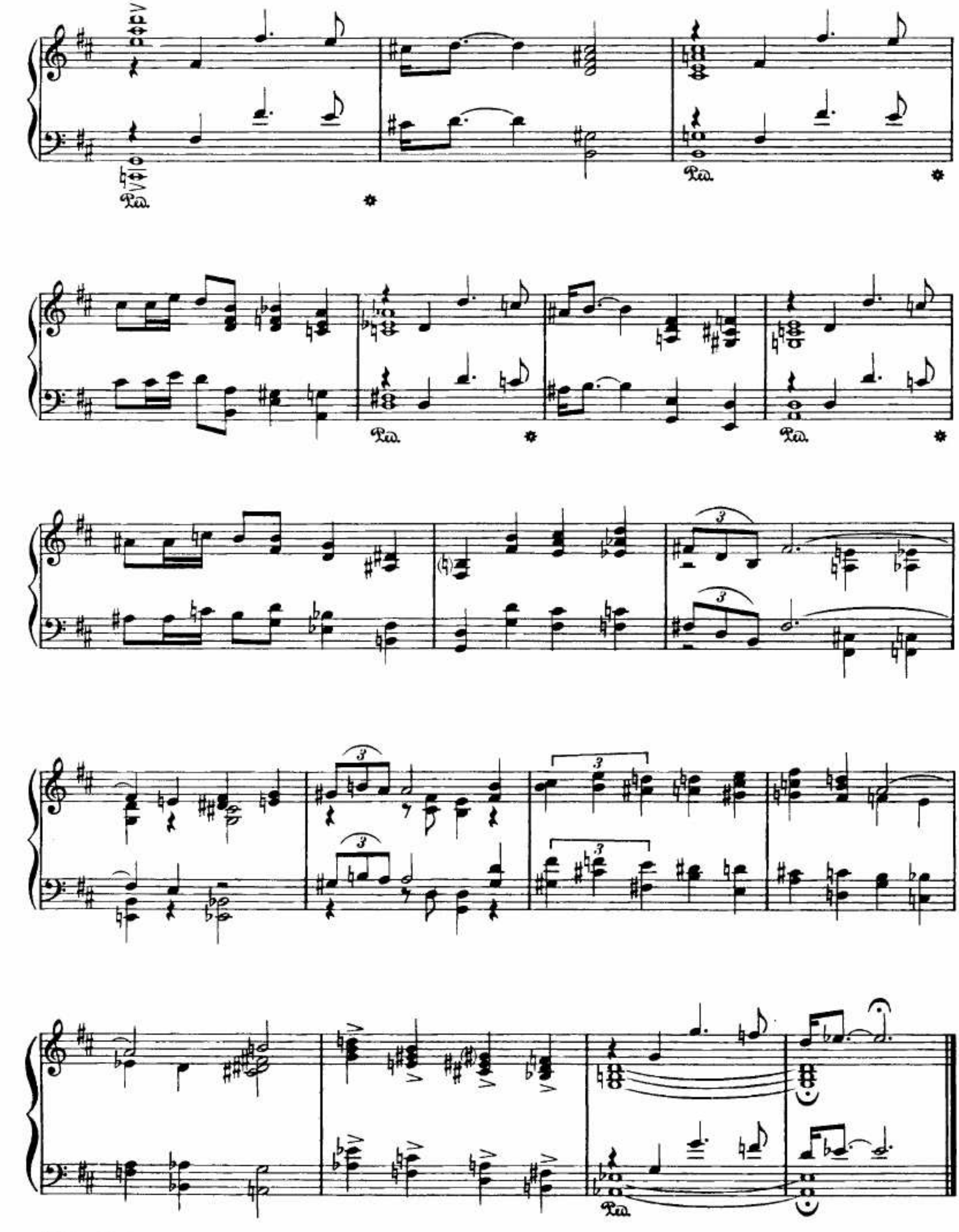

3
3
3
3
3
3
3
3
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU

From the Paramount Picture "ROSE OF THE RANCHO"

By LEO ROBIN and
RALPH RAINGER

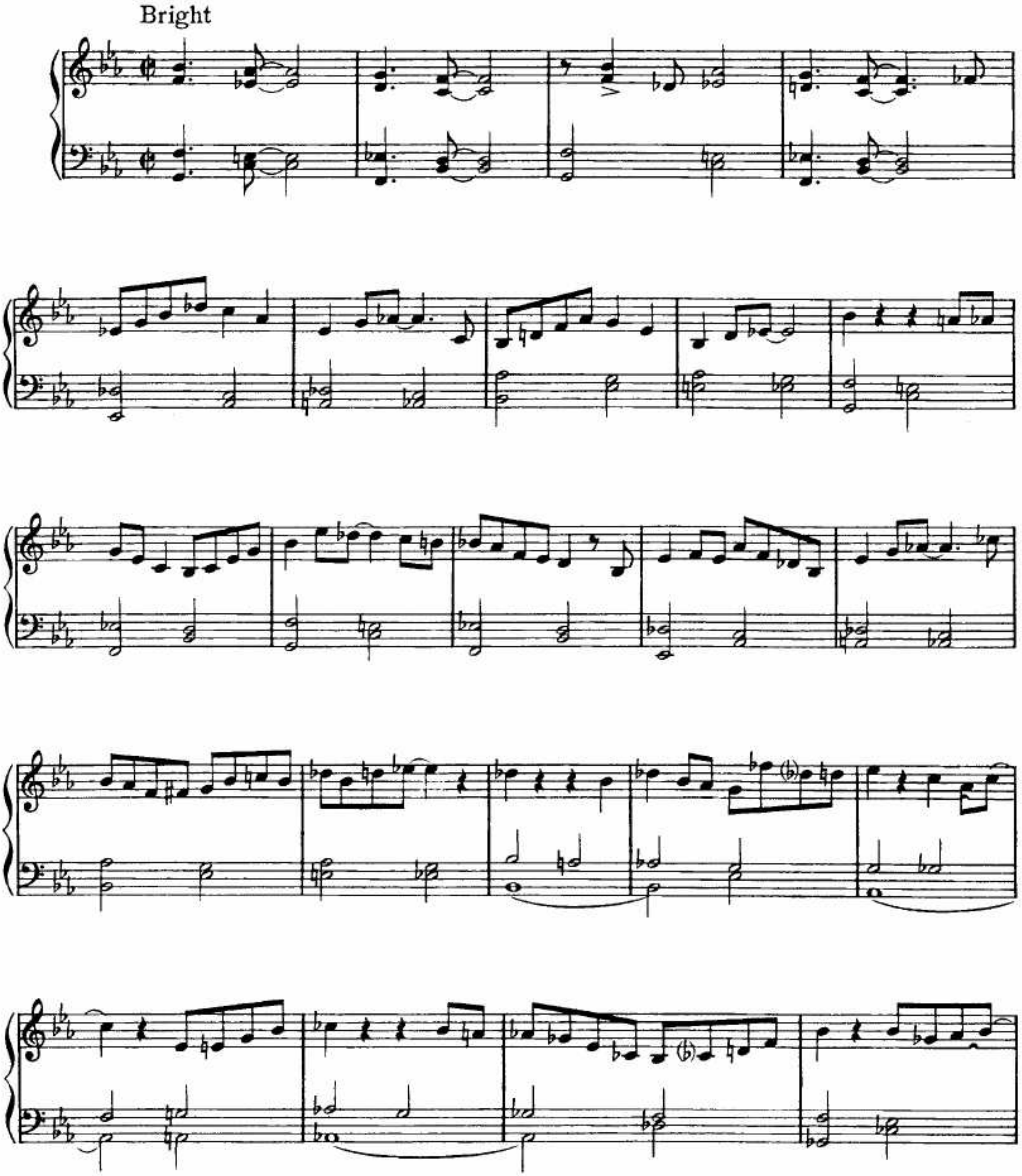


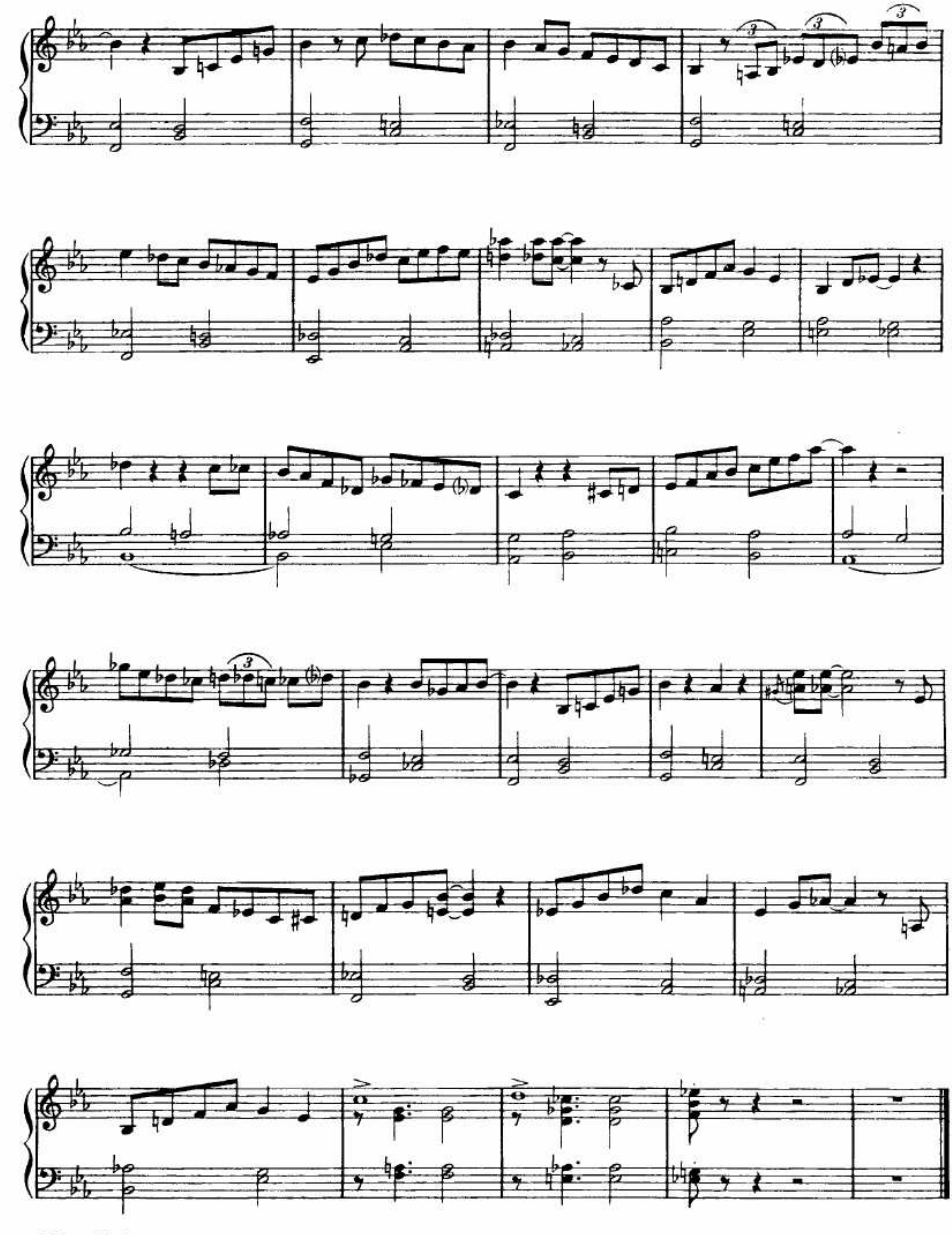

Ped.
*
Ped.
*
Ped.
*
Ped.
*
3
3
3
3
3
Ped.

I HEAR MUSIC

From the Paramount Picture "DANCING ON A DIME"

By BURTON LANE

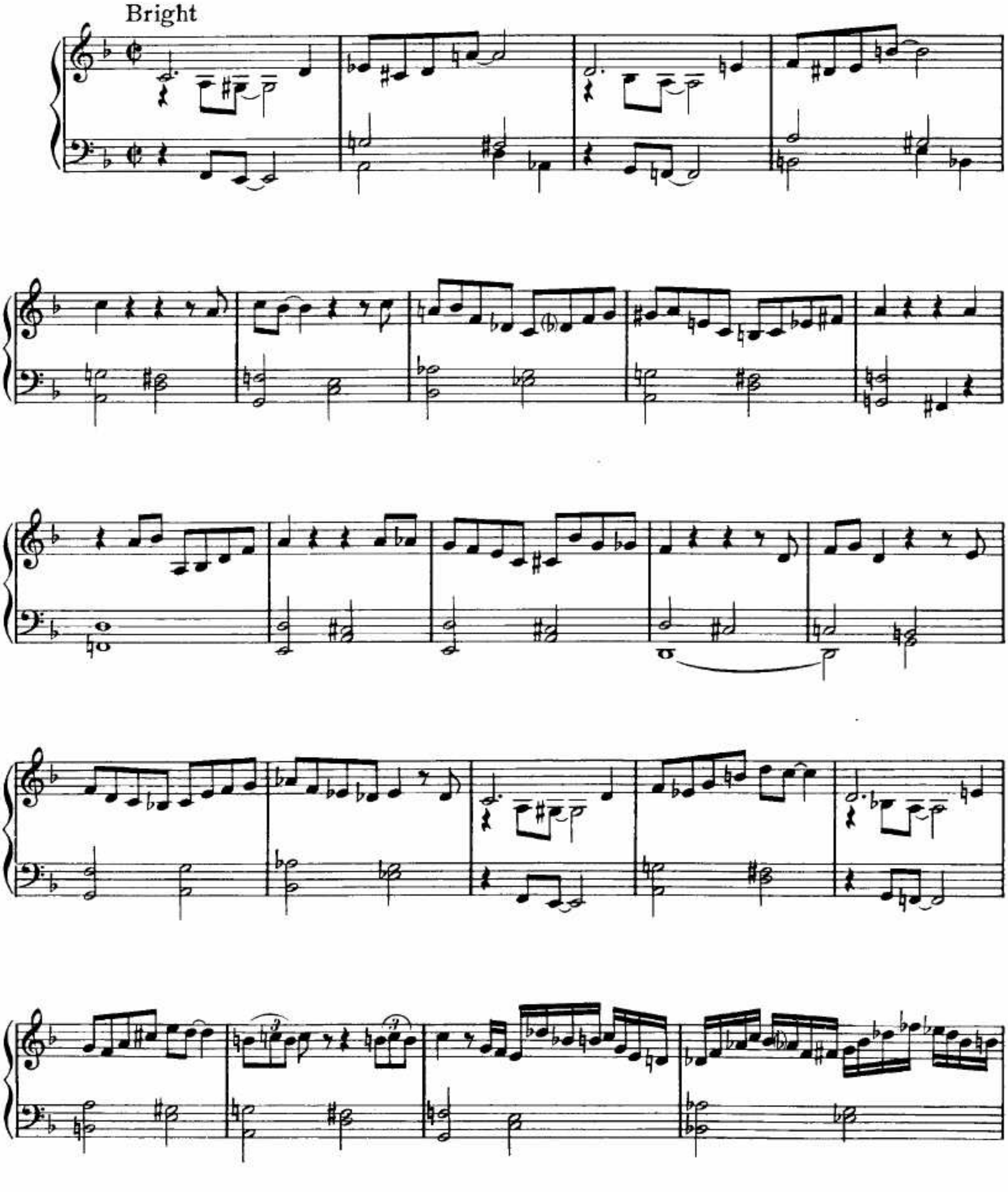


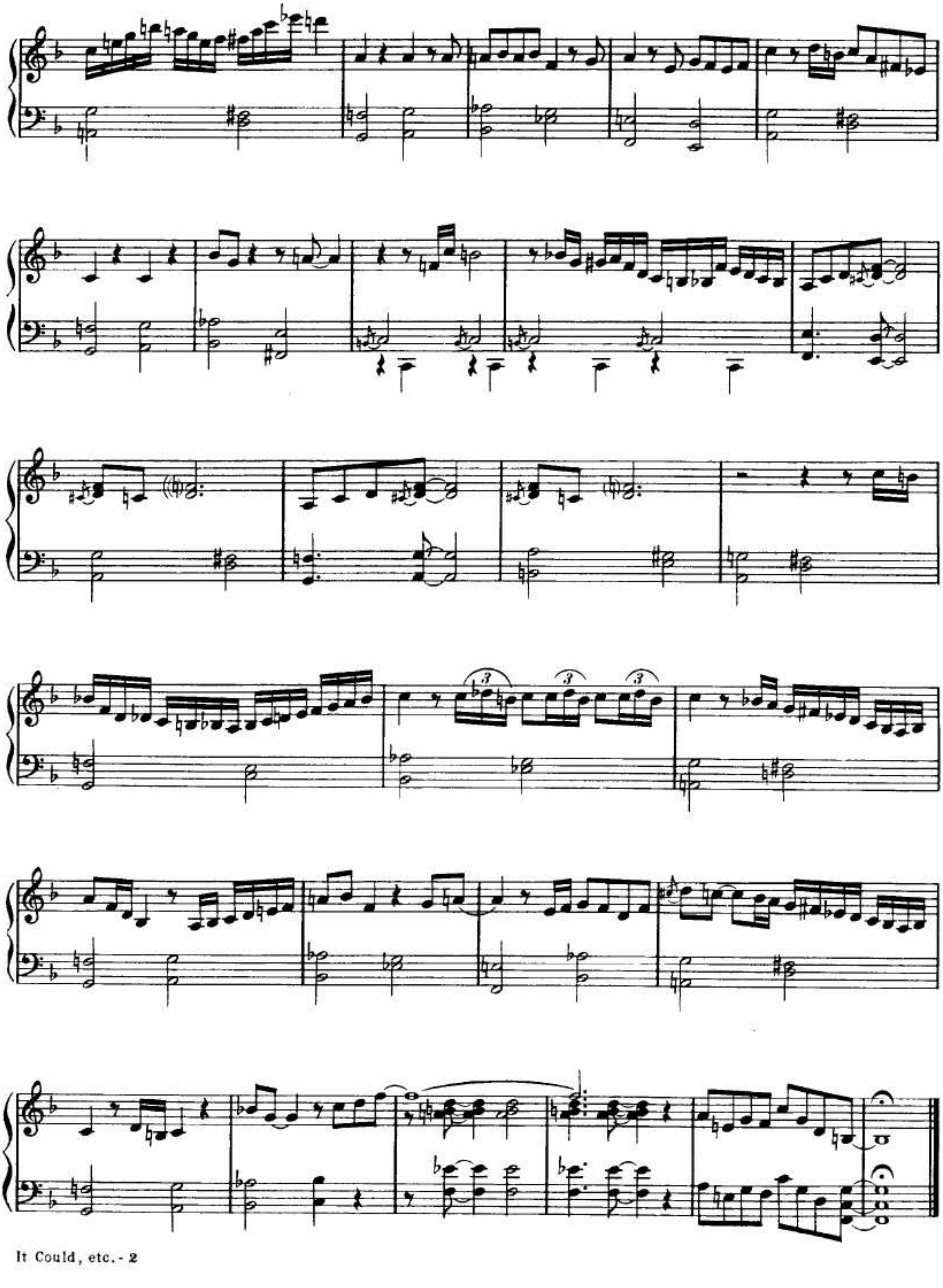


IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU

From the Paramount Picture "AND THE ANGELS SING"

By JAMES VAN HEUSEN

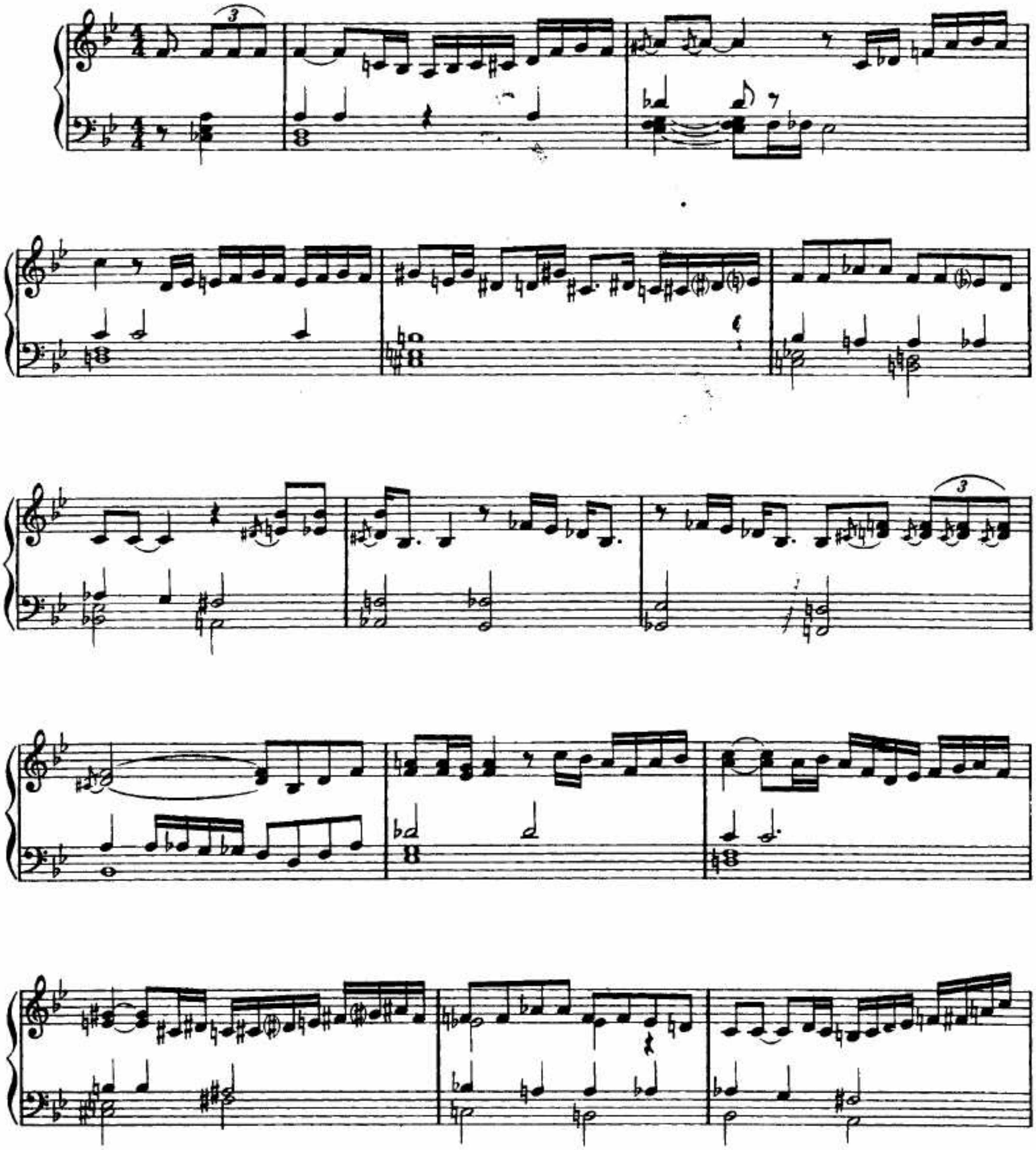


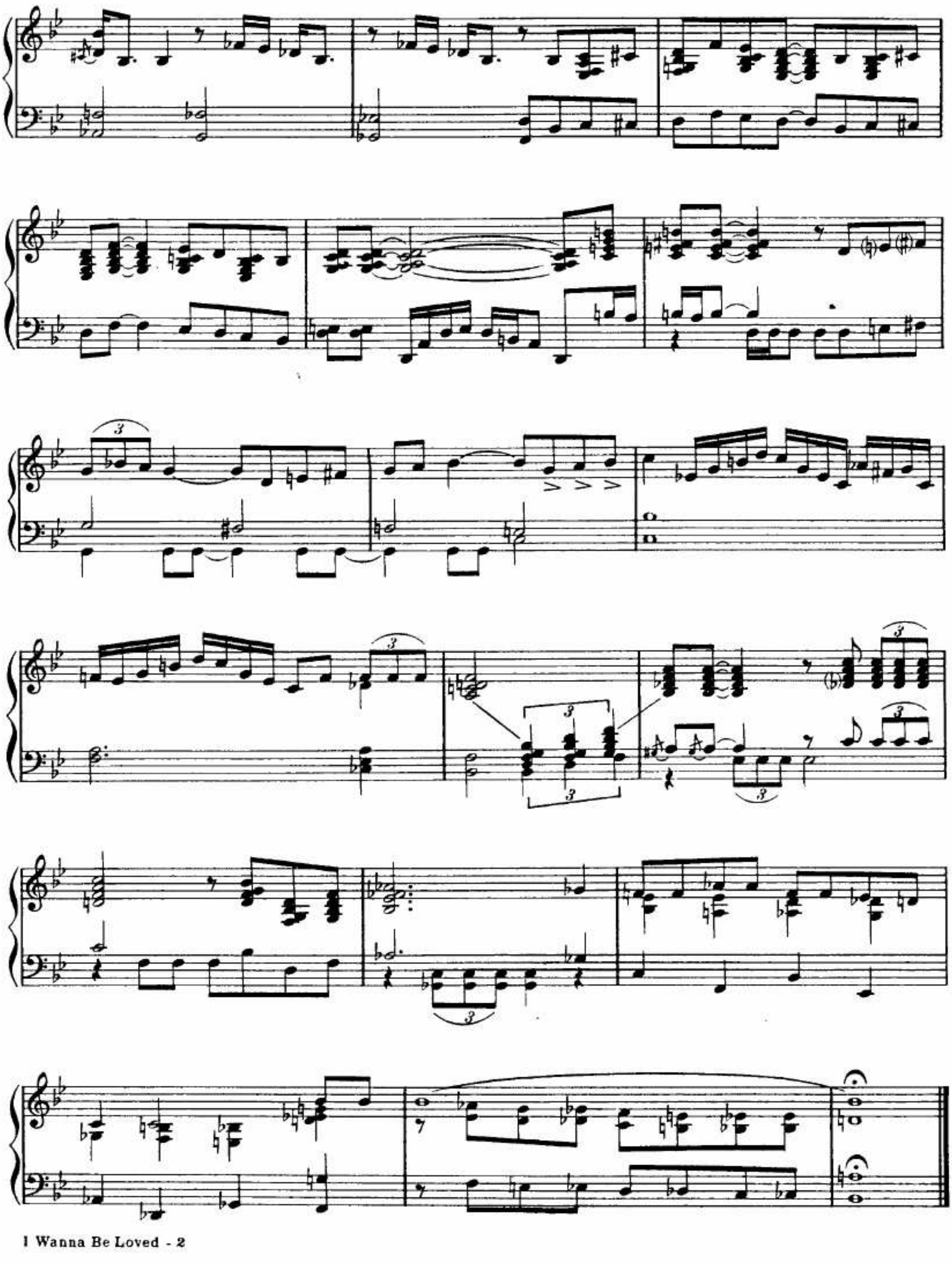


I WANNA BE LOVED

By JOHNNY GREEN

Slow Blues

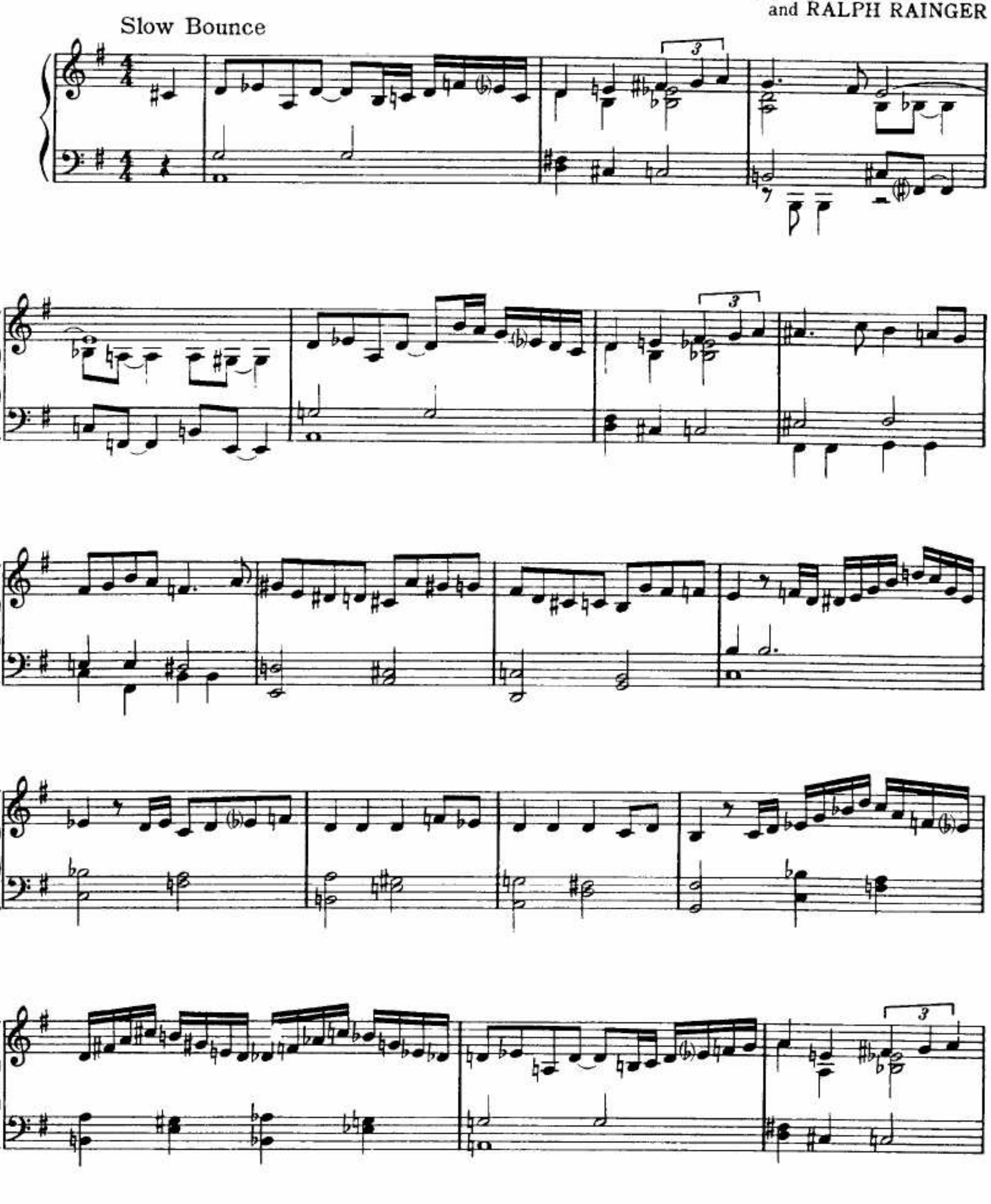


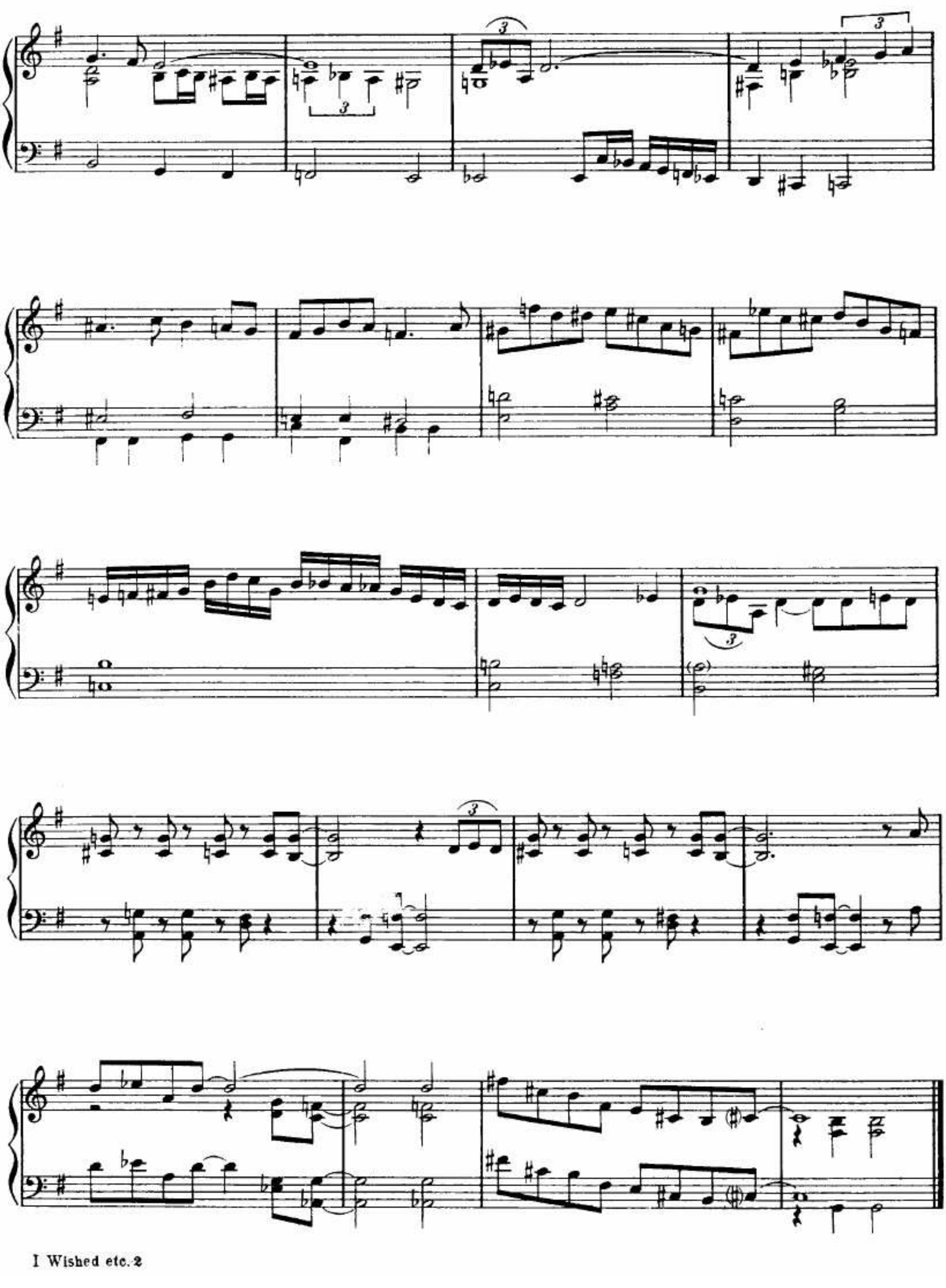


I WISHED ON THE MOON

From the Paramount Picture "THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1936"

By DOROTHY PARKER
and RALPH RAINGER

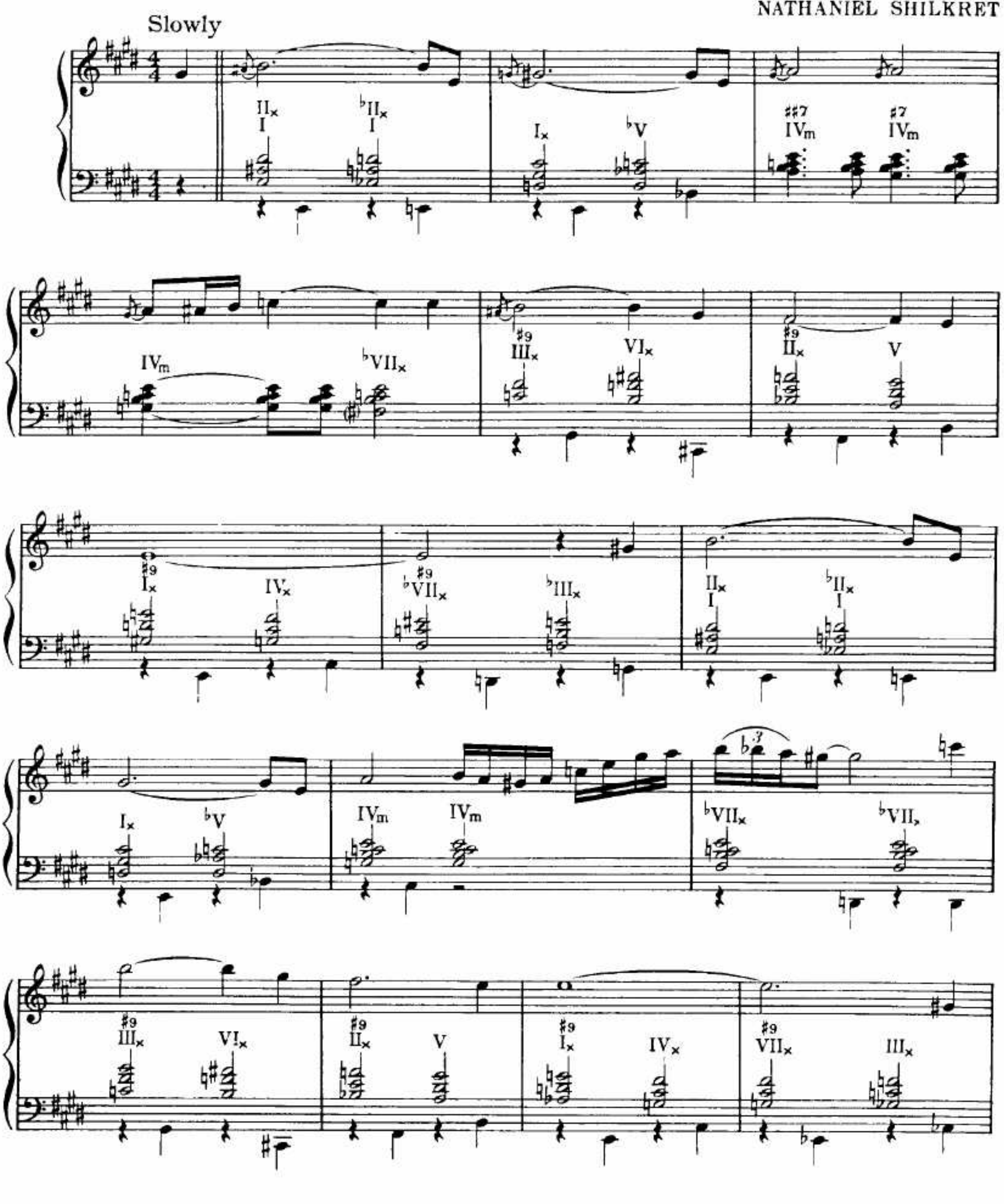


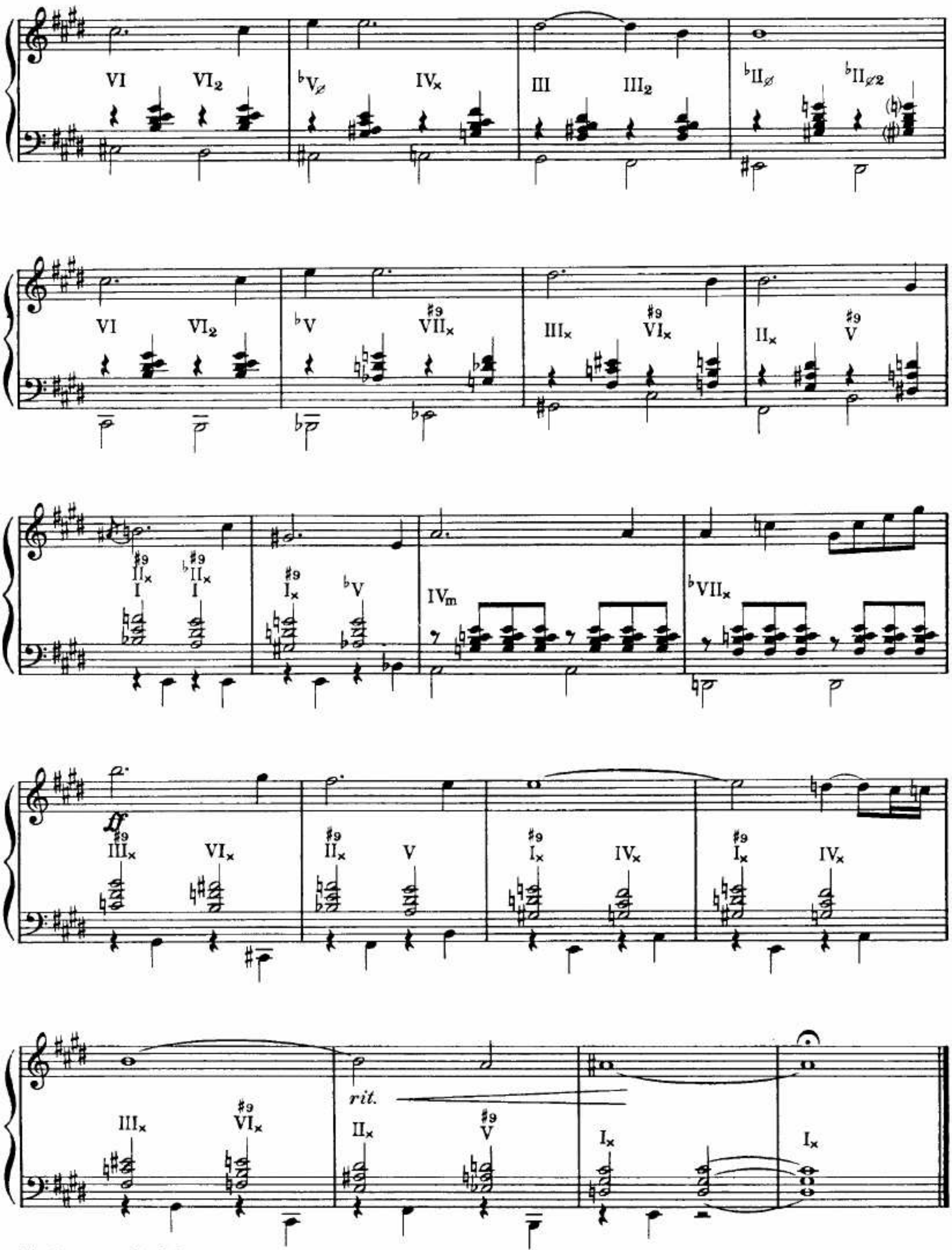


THE LONESOME ROAD

In Memory of Mose Rohan

By GENE AUSTIN and NATHANIEL SHILKRET

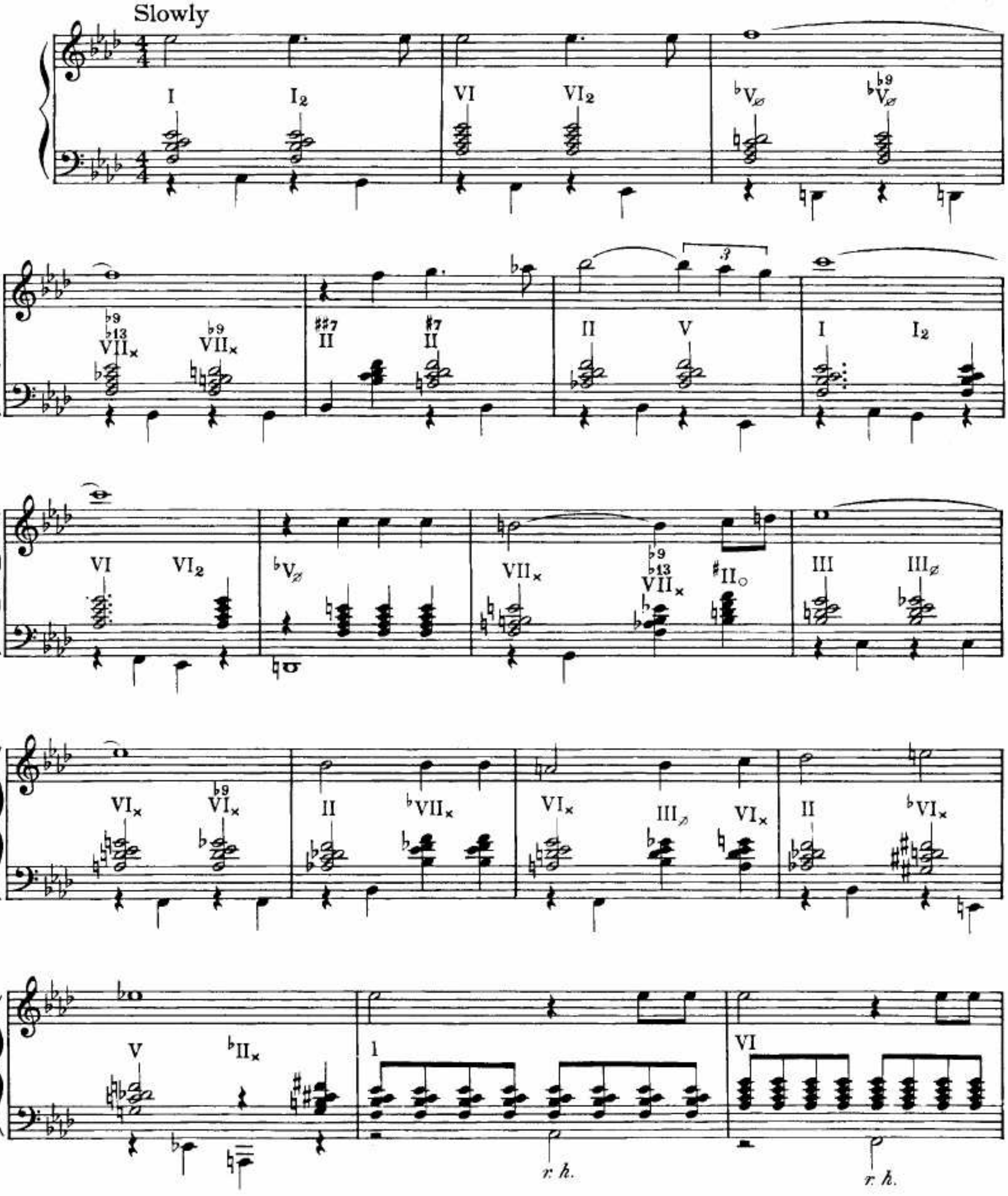


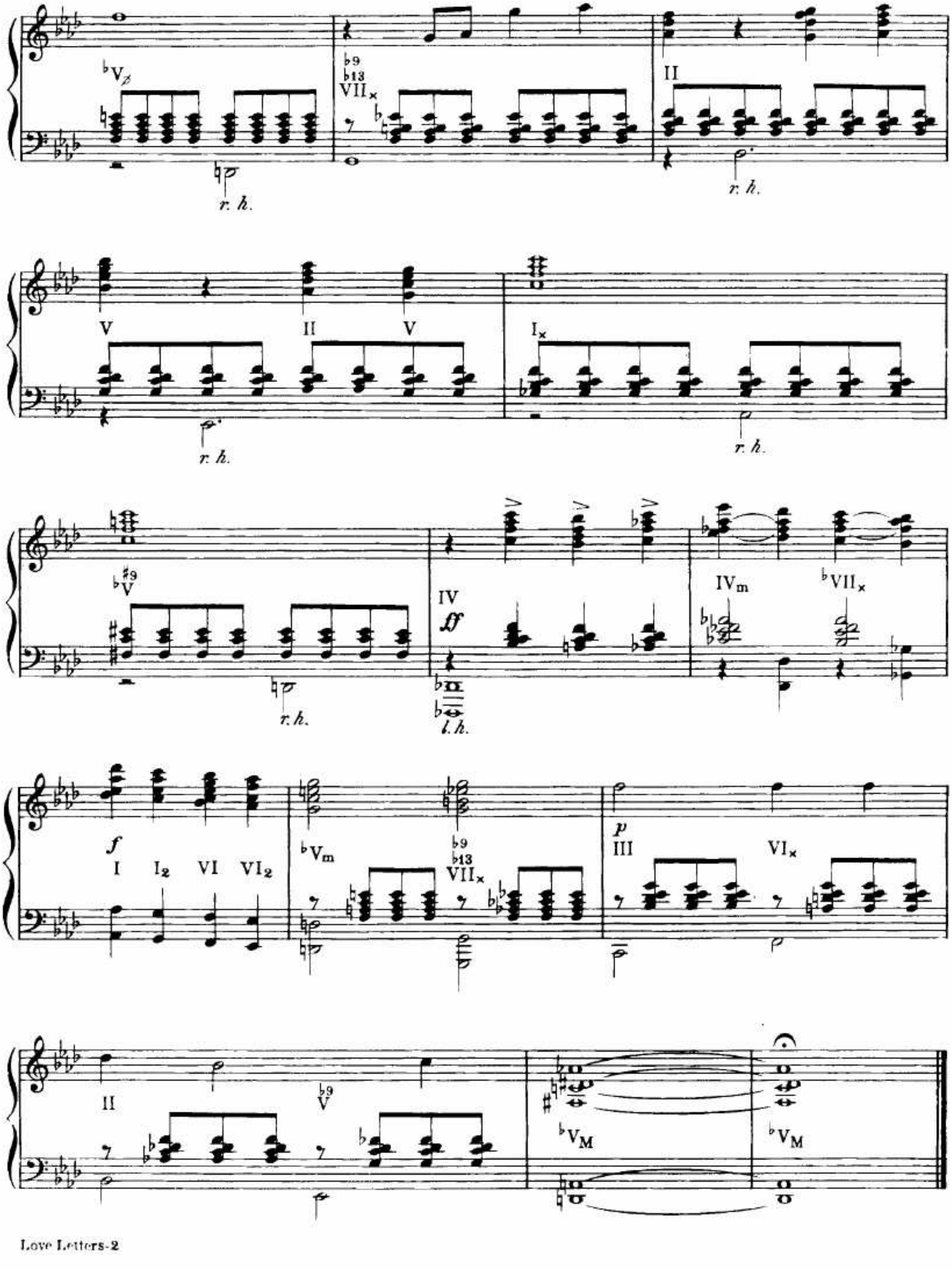

VI
VI2
♭V∅
IVx
III
III2
♭II∅
♭II∅2
VI
VI2
♭V
♯9 VIIx
IIIx
♯9 VIx
IIx
♯9 V
♯9 IIx I
♭ ♯9 IIx I
♯9 Ix
♭V
IVm
♭VIIx
ff
♯9 IIIx
VIx
♯9 IIx
V
♯9 Ix
IVx
♯9 Ix
IVx
IIIx
♯9 VIx
rit.
IIx
♯9 V
Ix
Ix

LOVE LETTERS

From the Paramount Picture "LOVE LETTERS"

By EDWARD HEYMAN
and VICTOR YOUNG

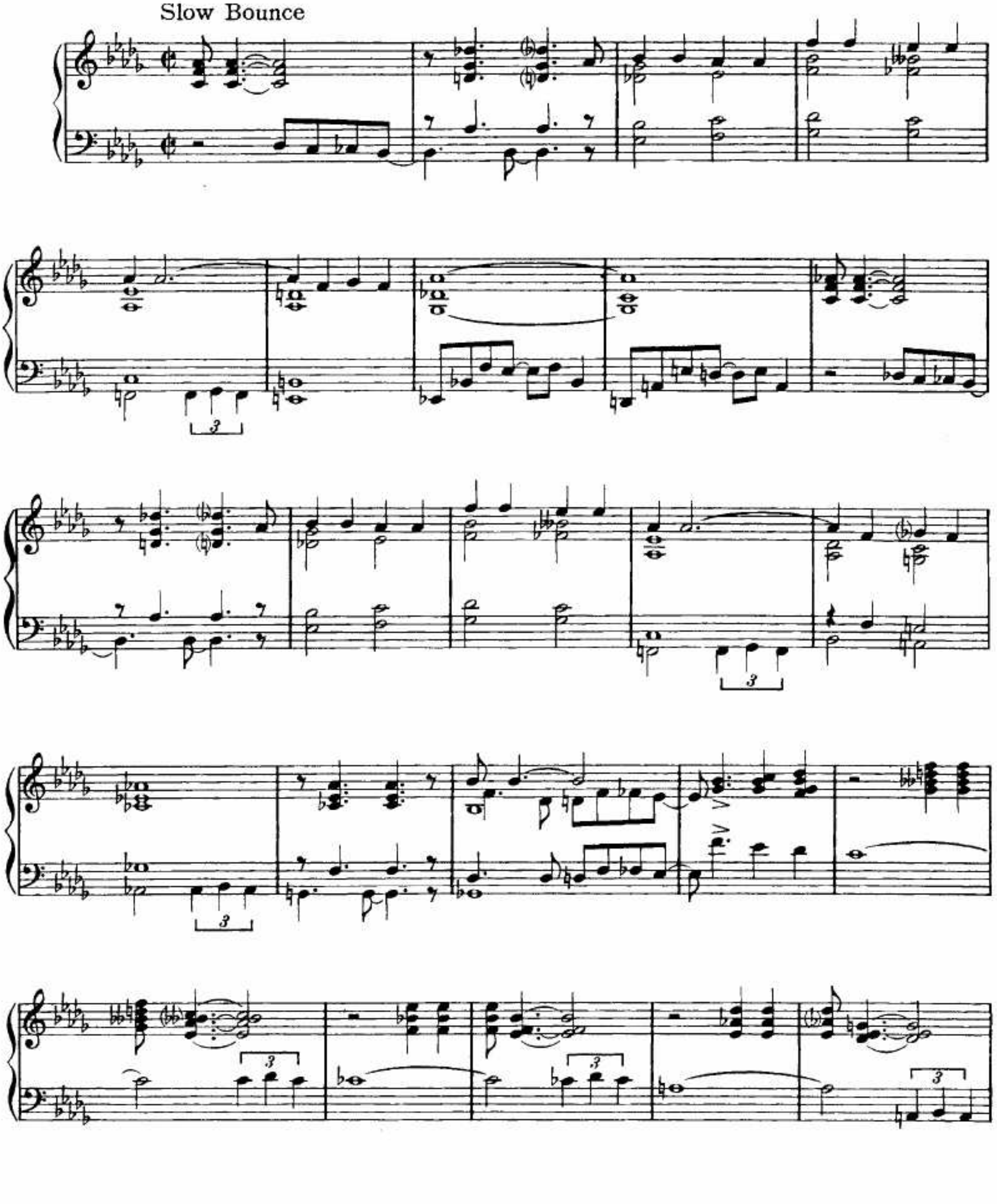


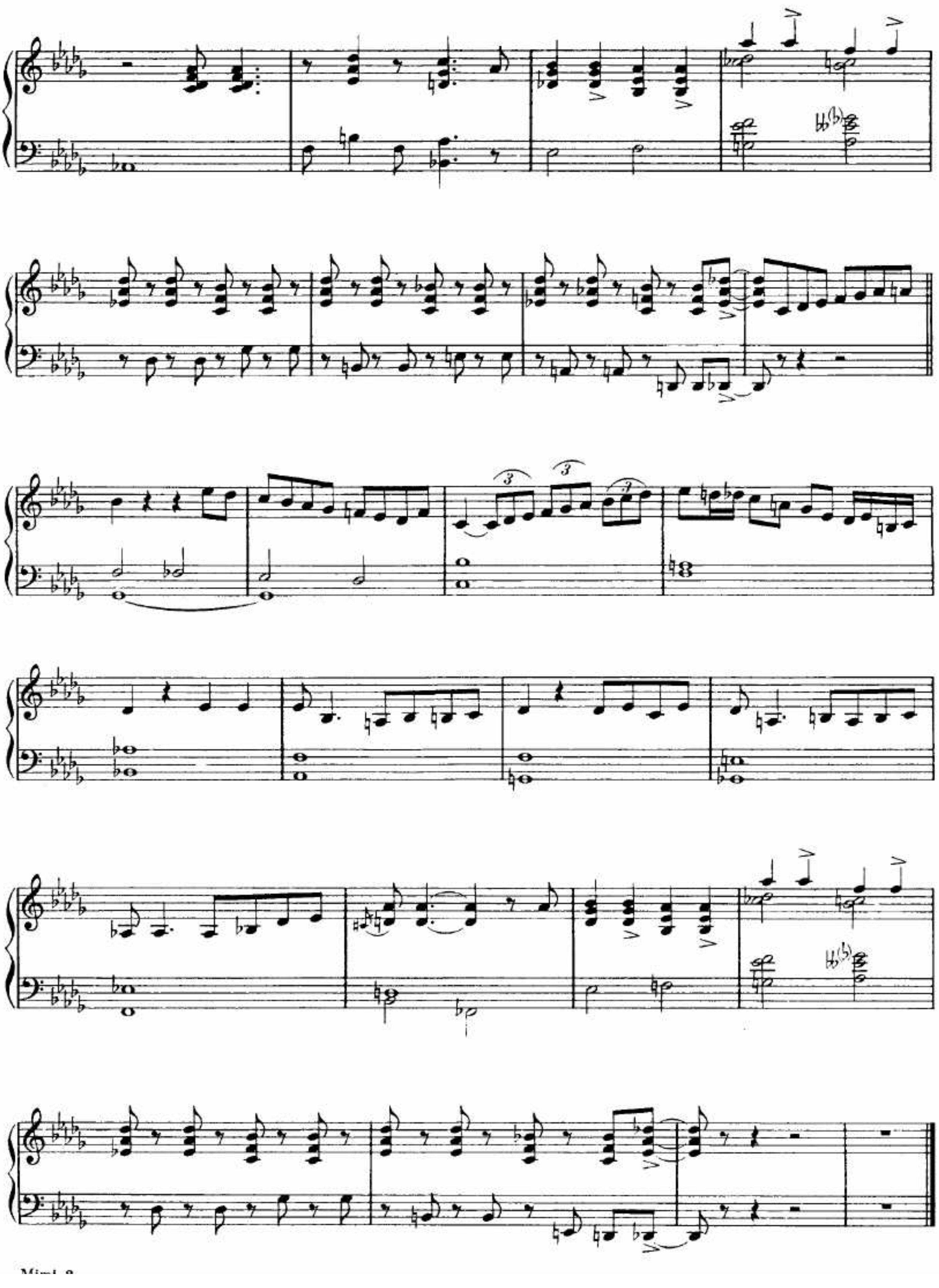

♭V∅
r. h.
♭9
♭13
VII×
II
r. h.
V
II
V
r. h.
I×
r. h.
♭V♯9
r.h.
IV
ff
l.h.
IVm
♭VII×
f
I
I2
VI
VI2
♭Vm
♭9
♭13
VII×
p
III
VI×
II
♭V♭9
♭VM
♭VM

MIMI

From the Paramount Picture "LOVE ME TONIGHT"

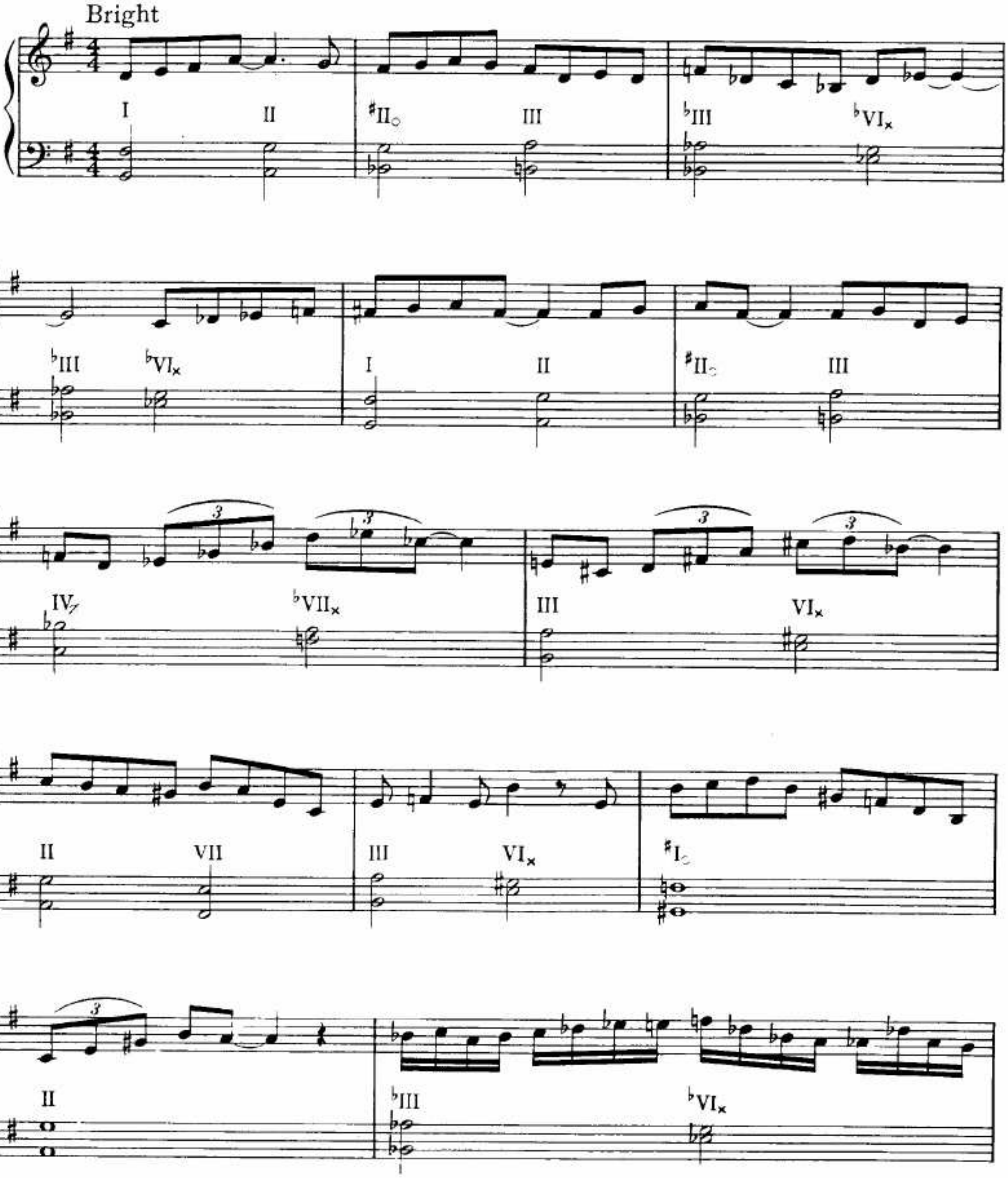
By RICHARD RODGERS

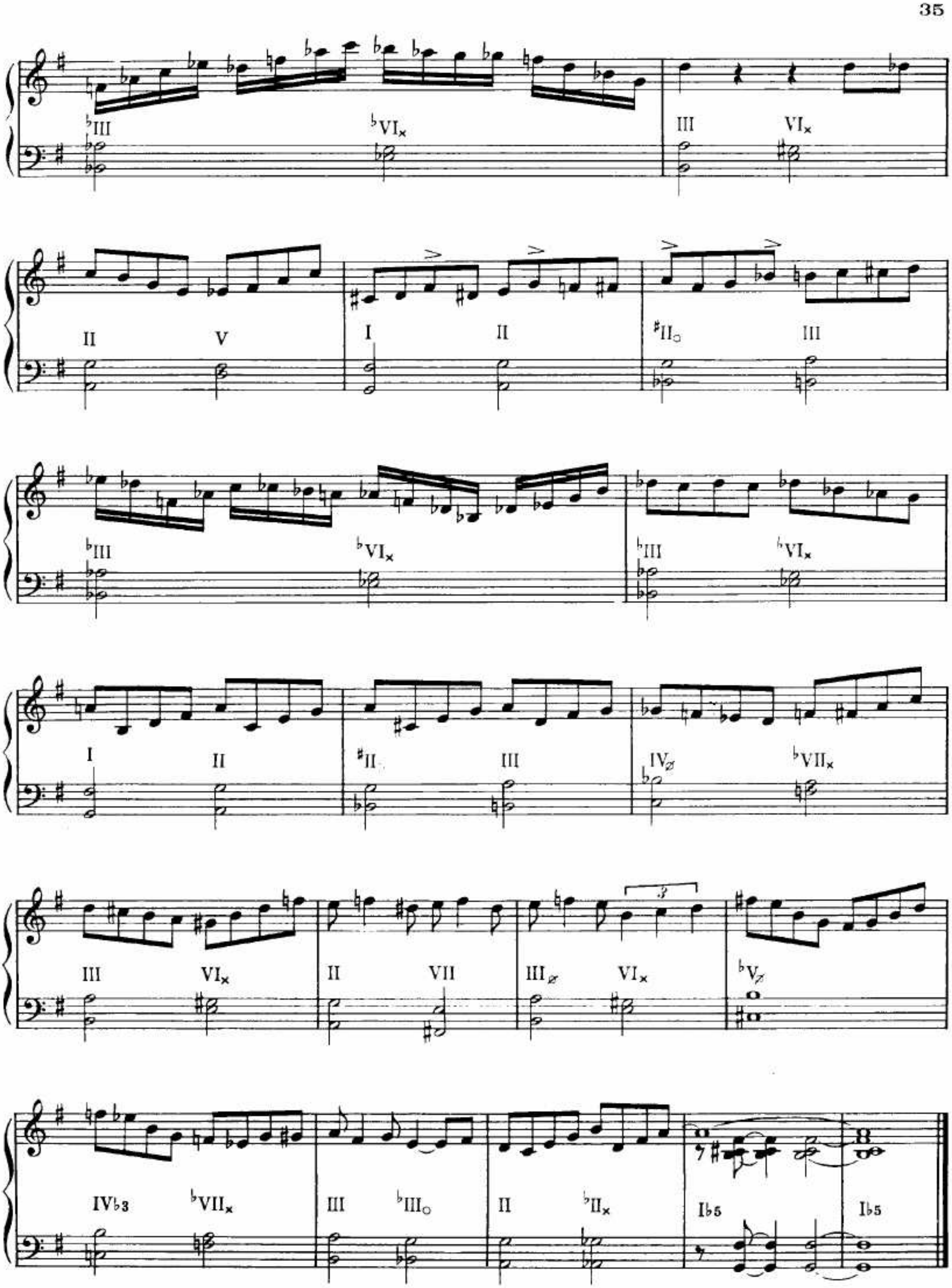




OUT OF NOWHERE

By EDWARD HEYMAN
and JOHN W. GREEN

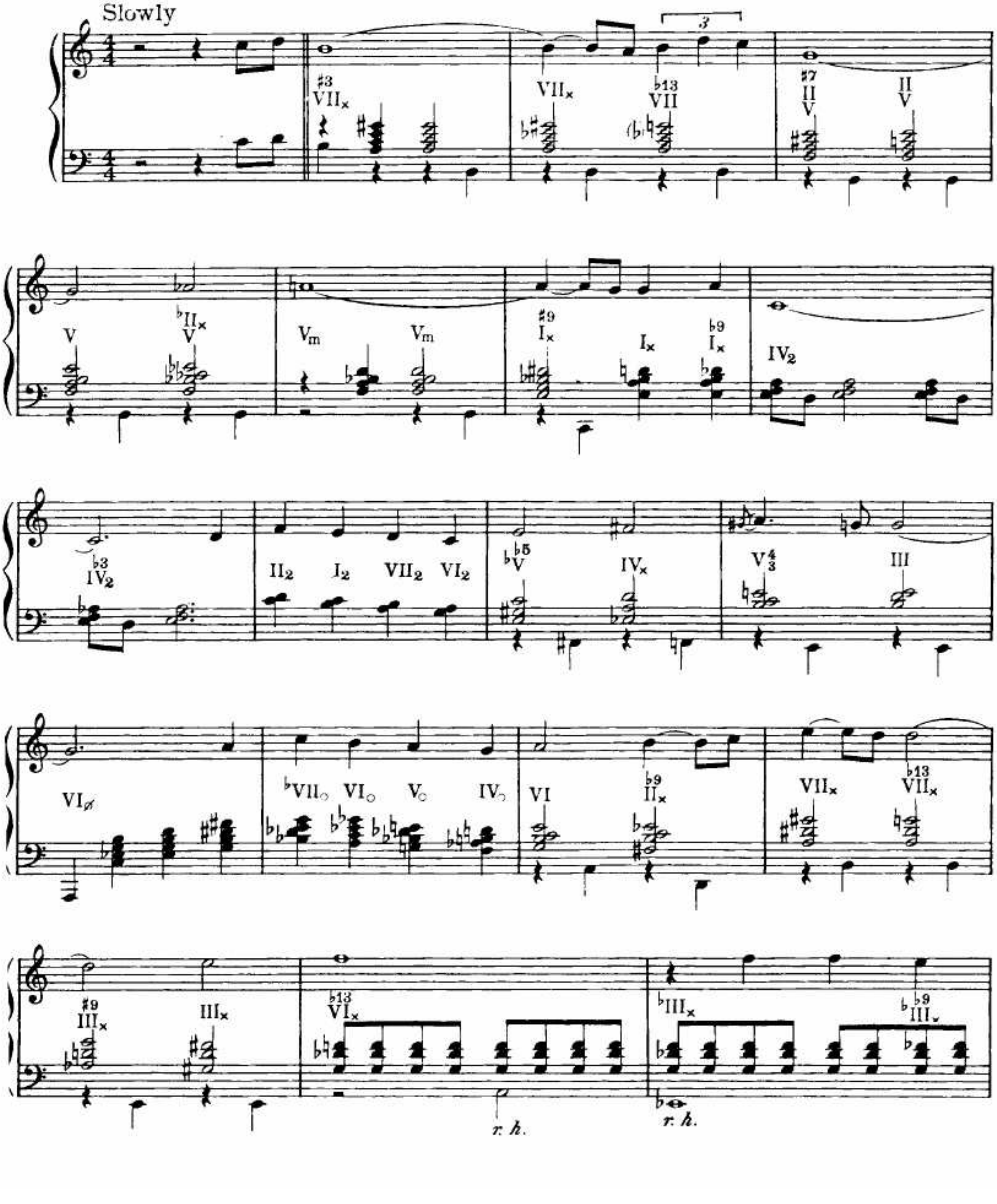


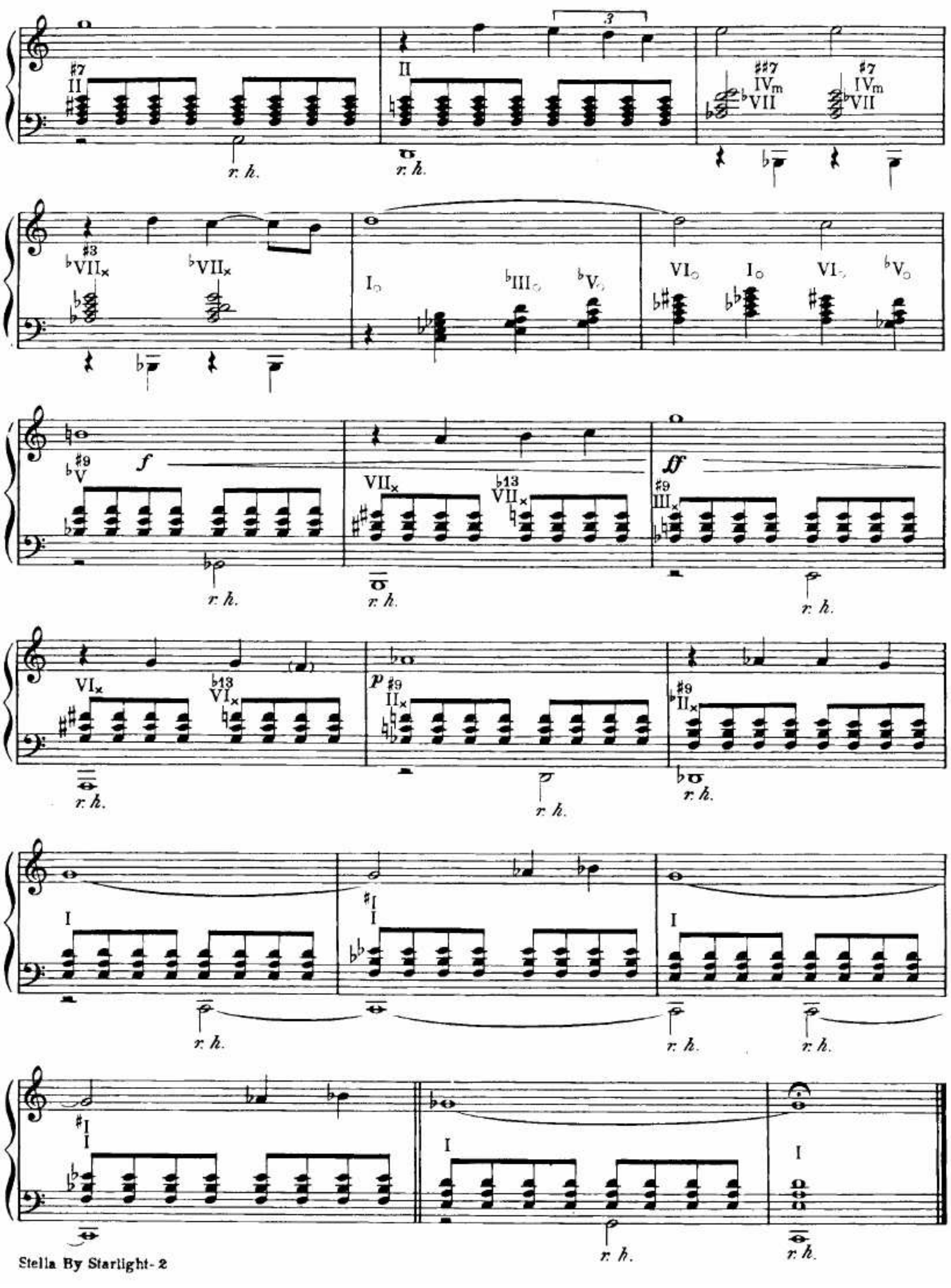

♭III
♭VI×
III
VI×
II
V
I
II
♯II○
III
♭III
♭VI×
♭III
♭VI×
I
II
♯II
III
IV∅
♭VII×
III
VI×
II
VII
3
III∅
VI×
♭V∅
IV♭3
♭VII×
III
♭III○
II
♭II×
I♭5
I♭5

STELLA BY STARLIGHT

From the Paramount Picture "THE UNINVITED"

By NED WASHINGTON
and VICTOR YOUNG

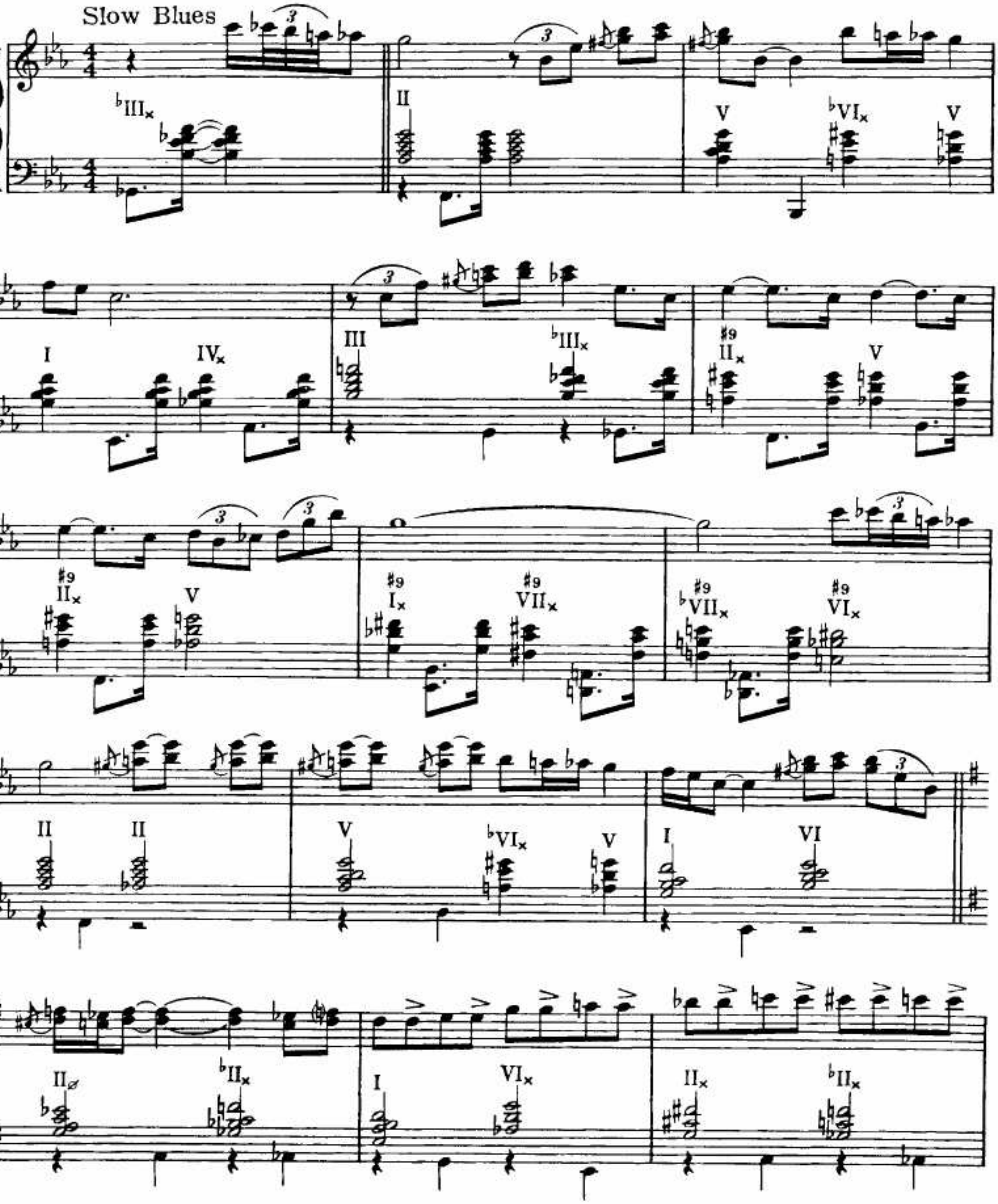


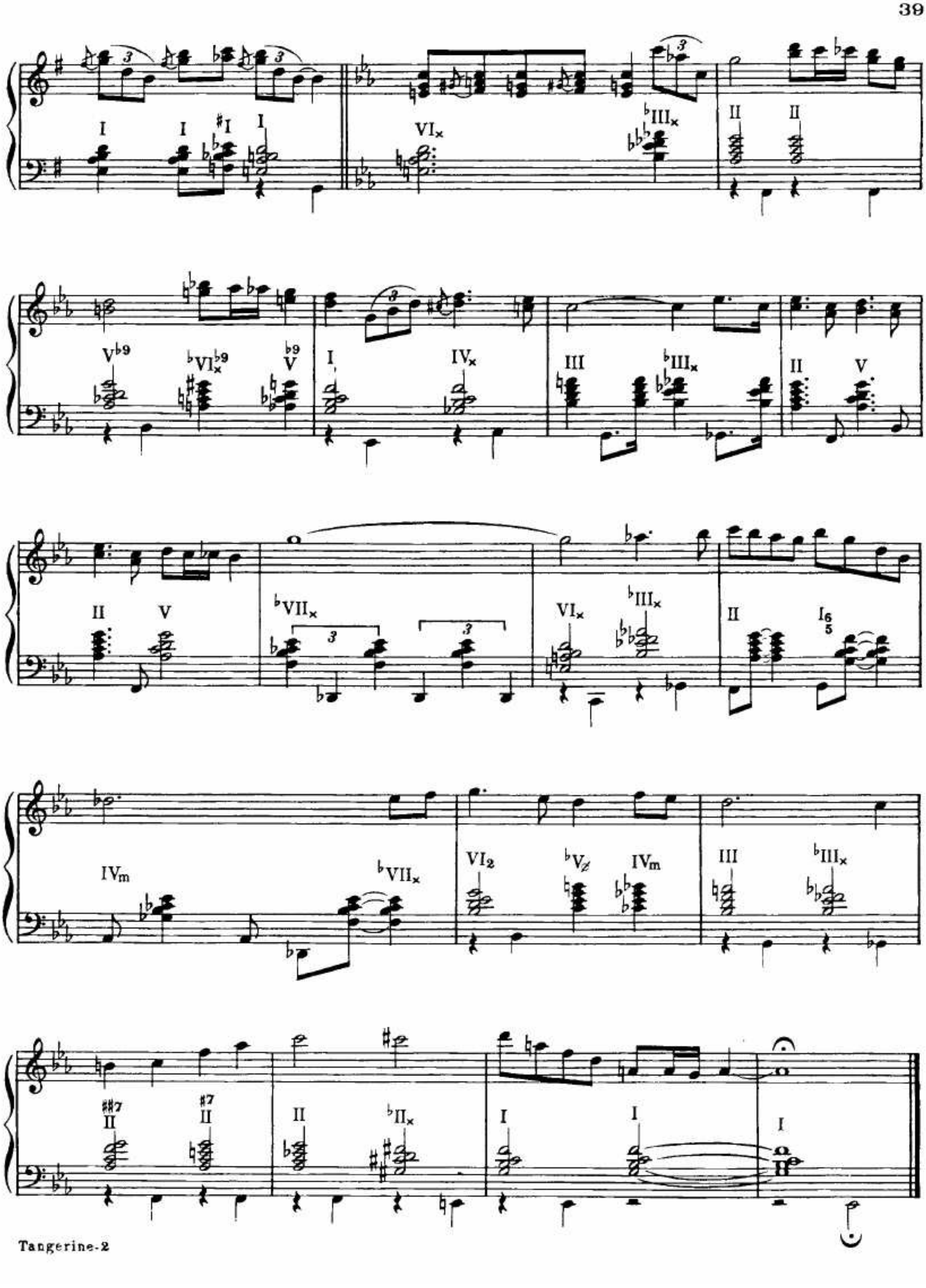

3
♯7
II
II
r. h.
r. h.
♯♯7
IVm
♭VII
♯7
IVm
♭VII
♯3
♭VIIx
♭VIIx
I○
♭III○
♭V○
VI○
I○
VI○
♭V○
♭♯9
♭V
f
r. h.
VIIx
♭13
VIIx
r. h.
ff
♯9
IIIx
r. h.
VIx
♭13
VIx
r. h.
p
♯9
IIx
r. h.
♯9
♭IIx
r. h.
I
r. h.
♯I
I
I
r. h.
r. h.
♯I
I
I
r. h.
I
r. h.

TANGERINE

From the Paramount Picture "THE FLEET'S IN"

By JOHNNY MERCER and
VICTOR SCHERTZINGER

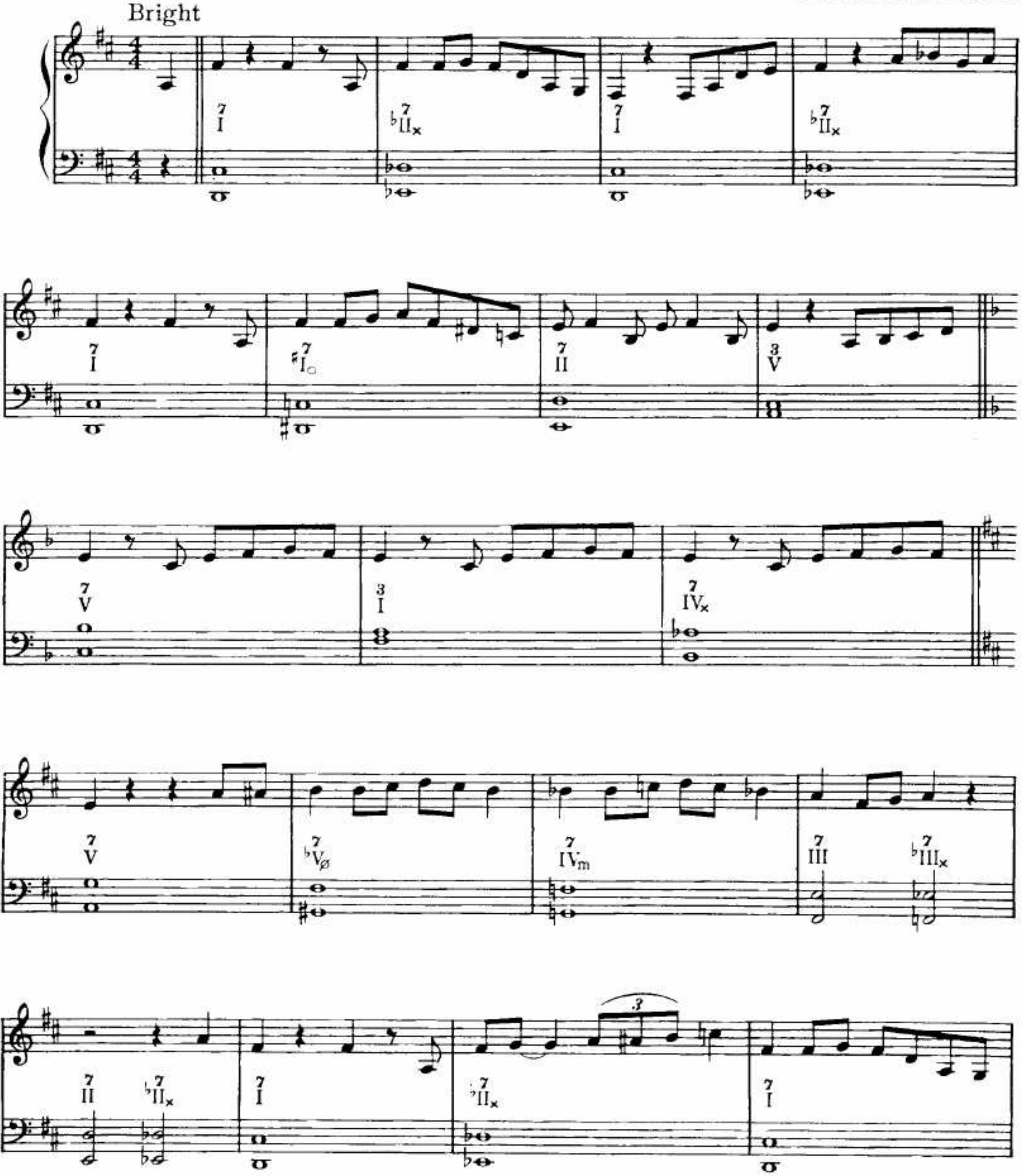


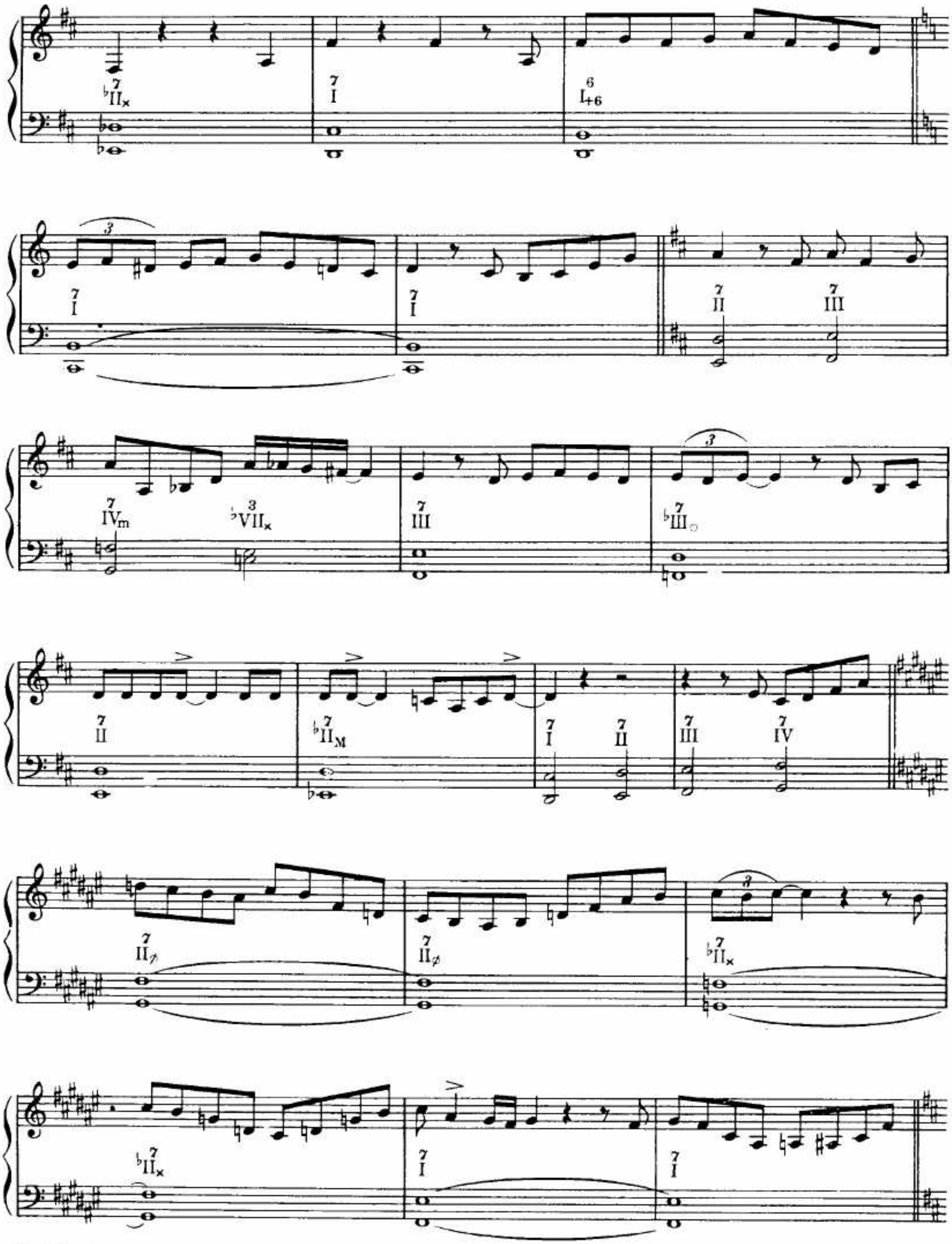

3
3
I
I
♯I
I
VI×
♭III×
3
II
II
V♭9
♭VI♭9×
♭9 V
3
I
IV×
III
♭III×
II
V
II
V
♭VII×
3
3
VI×
♭III×
II
I6 5
IV m
♭VII×
VI2
♭V⌀
IV m
III
♭III×
♯♯7 II
♯7 II
II
♭II×
I
I
I

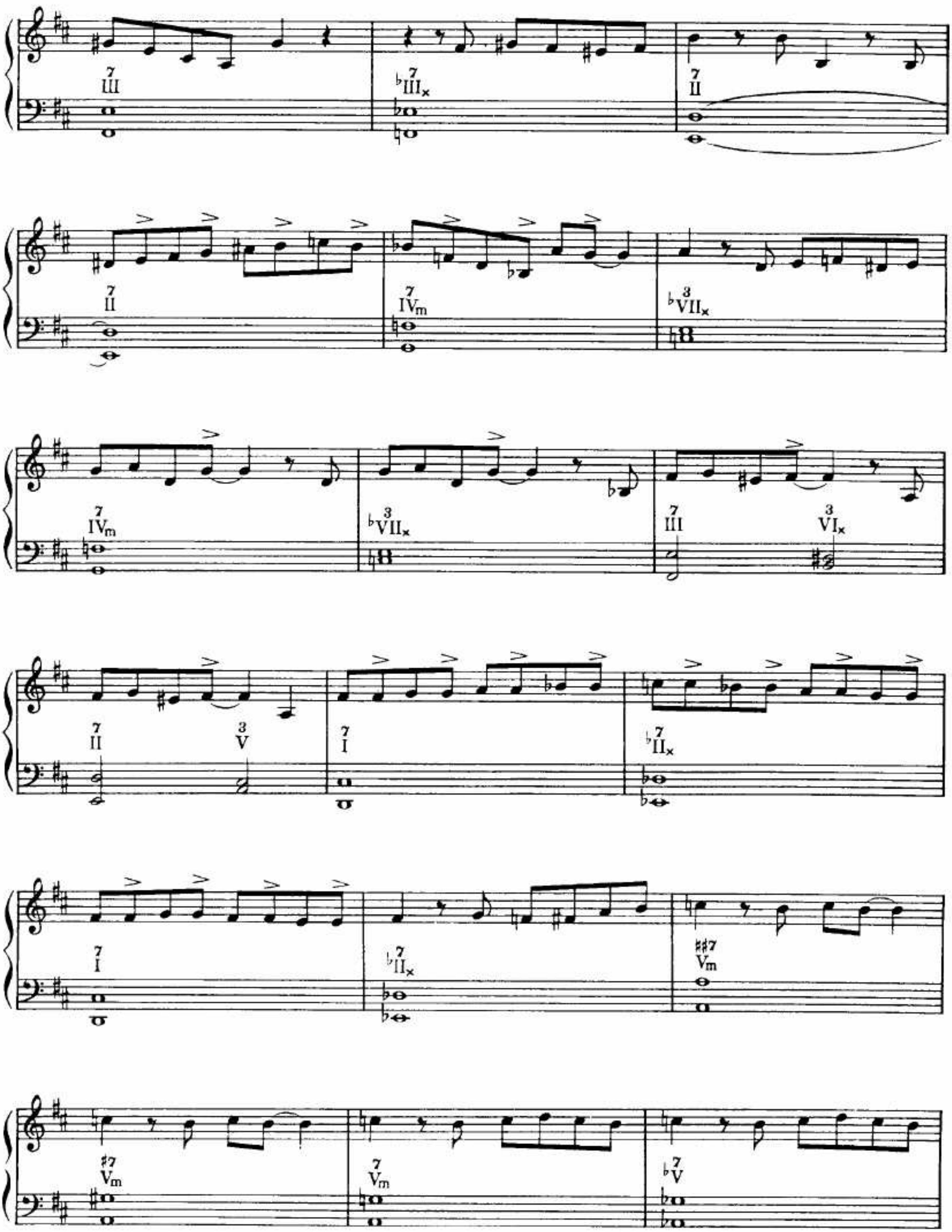
THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

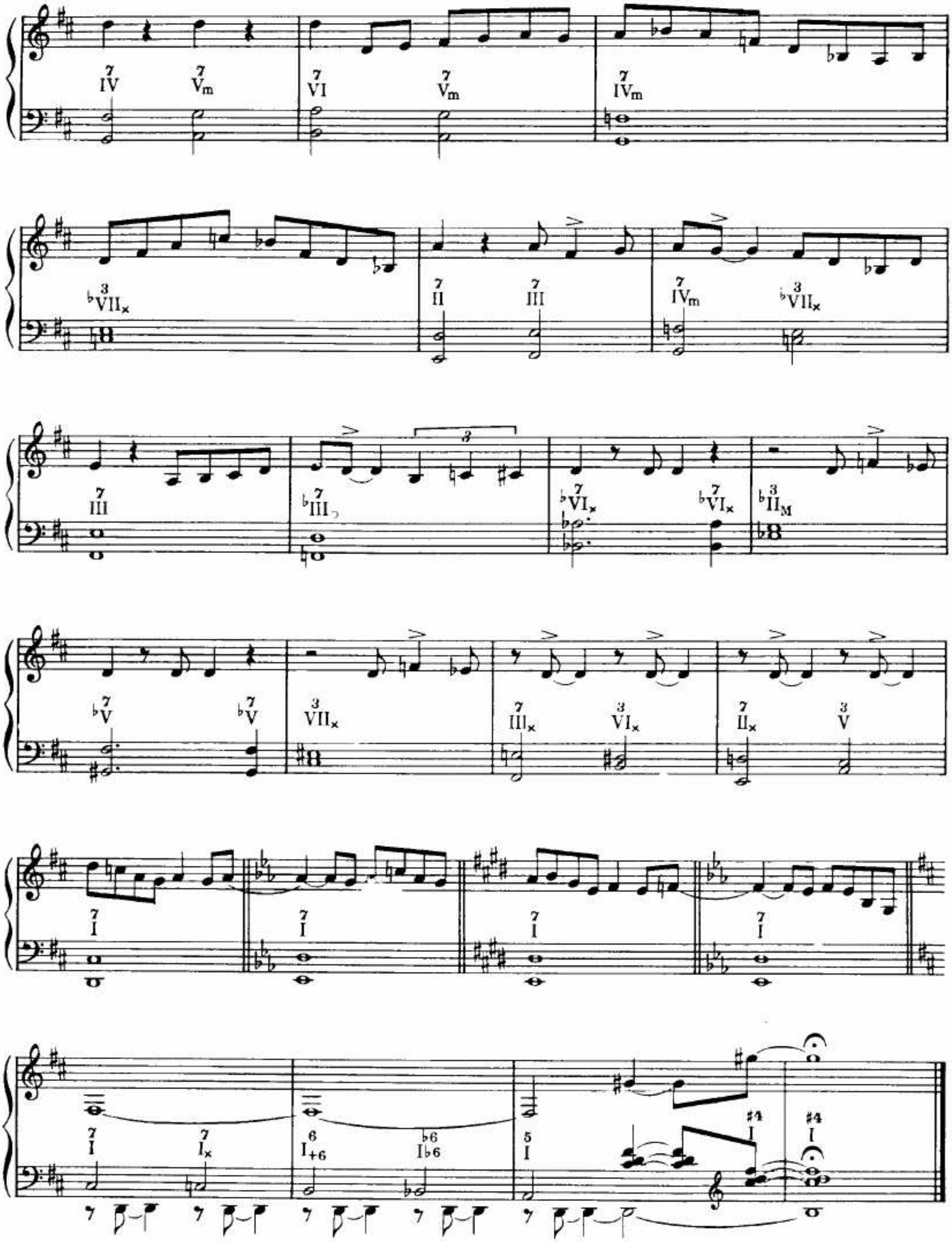
From the Paramount Picture "STAR SPANGLED RHYTHM"

By JOHNNY MERCER
and HAROLD ARLEN



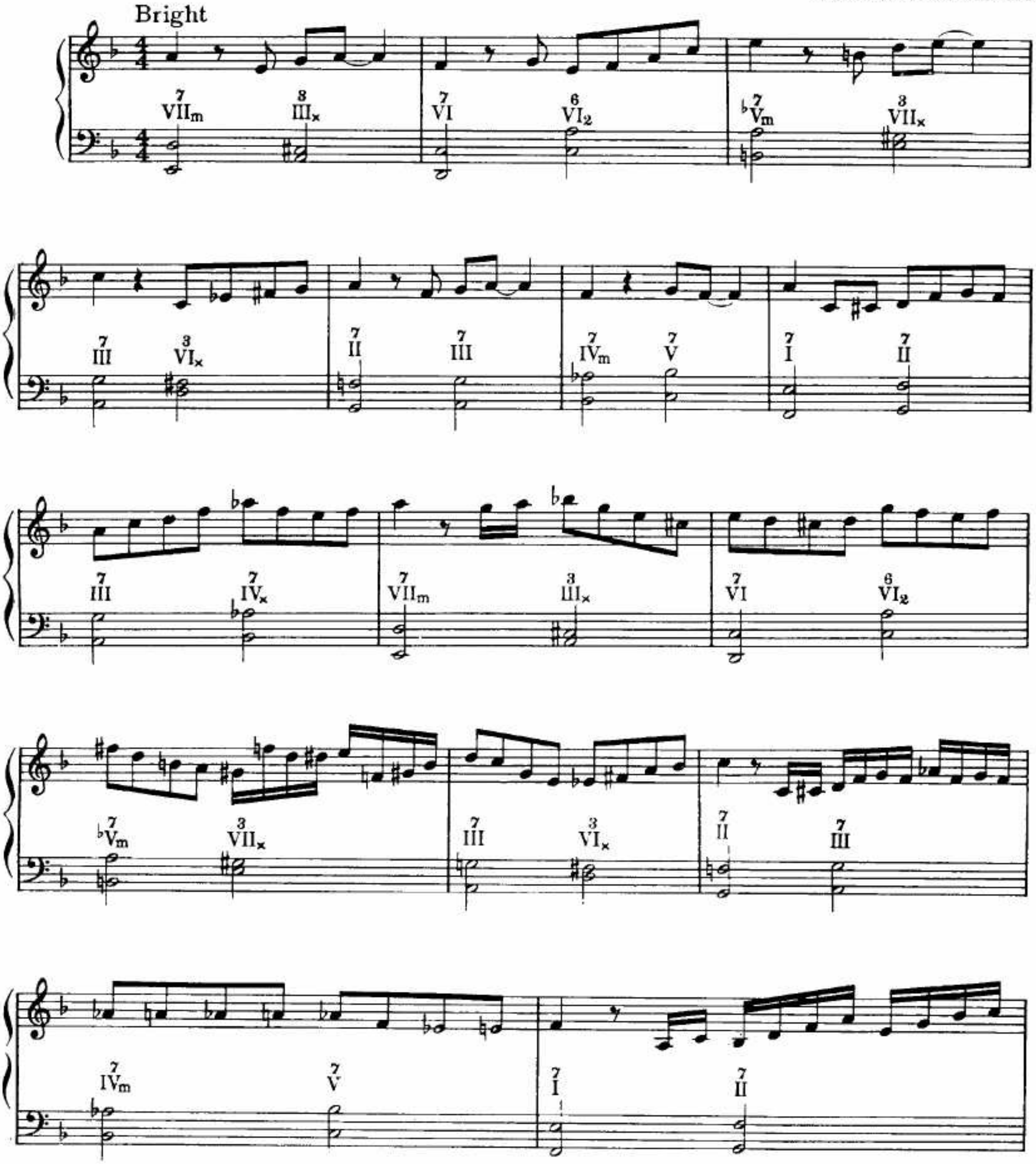

♭II×7
I7
I+6 6
3
I7
I7
II7
III7
IVm7
♭VII×3
III7
3
♭III○7
II7
♭IIM7
I7
II7
III7
IV7
IIø7
IIø7
3
♭II×7
♭II×7
I7
I7

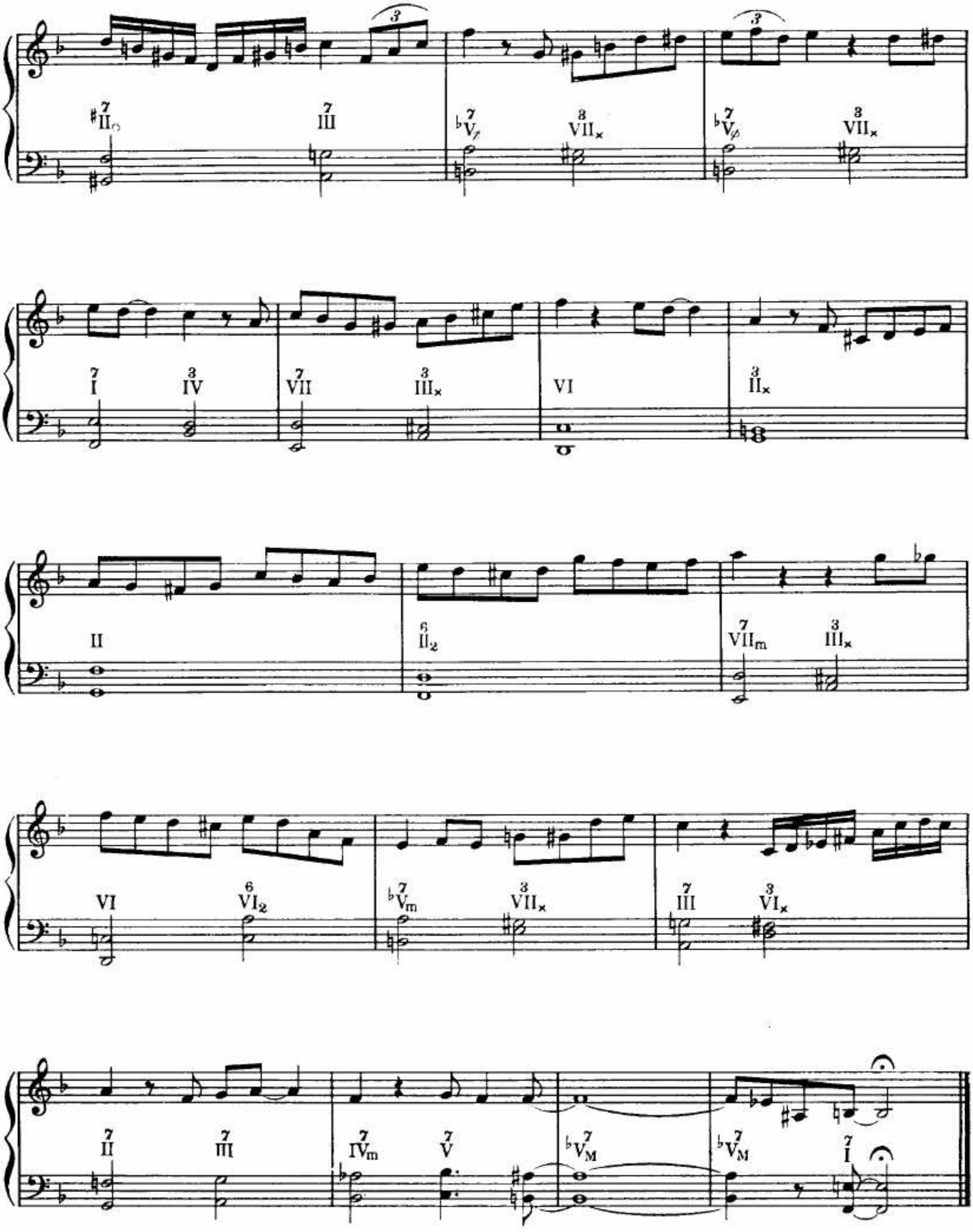

7 III
♭7 III×
7 II
7 II
7 IVm
♭3 VII×
7 IVm
♭3 VII×
7 III
3 VI×
7 II
3 V
7 I
♭7 II×
7 I
♭7 II×
♮♯7 Vm
♯7 Vm
7 Vm
♭7 V


7 IV
7 Vm
7 VI
7 Vm
7 IVm
♭ 3 VII×
7 II
7 III
7 IVm
♭ 3 VII×
7 III
♭ 7 III♭
♭ 7 VI×
♭ 7 VI×
♭ 3 IIM
♭ 7 V
♭ 7 V
3 VII×
7 III×
3 VI×
7 II×
3 V
7 I
7 I
7 I
7 I
7 I
7 I×
6 I+6
♭6 I♭6
5 I
♯4 I
♯4 I
3

WITH THE WIND AND THE RAIN IN YOUR HAIR

By JACK LAWRENCE
and CLARA EDWARDS




3
$\sharp\mathrm{II}^{7}_{\circ}$
III^{7}
$\flat\mathrm{V}^{7}_{\phi}$
$\mathrm{VII}^{3}_{\times}$
3
$\flat\mathrm{V}^{7}_{\phi}$
$\mathrm{VII}^{3}_{\times}$
I^{7}
IV^{3}
VII^{7}
$\mathrm{III}^{3}_{\times}$
VI
$\mathrm{II}^{3}_{\times}$
II
II^{6}_{2}
VII^{7}_{m}
$\mathrm{III}^{3}_{\times}$
VI
VI^{6}_{2}
$\flat\mathrm{V}^{7}_{m}$
$\mathrm{VII}^{3}_{\times}$
III^{7}
$\mathrm{VI}^{3}_{\times}$
II^{7}
III^{7}
IV^{7}_{m}
V^{7}
$\flat\mathrm{V}^{7}_{M}$
$\flat\mathrm{V}^{7}_{M}$
I^{7}

YOU LEAVE ME BREATHLESS

From the Paramount Picture "COCOANUT GROVE"

By FREDERICK HOLLANDER